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ABSTRACT

This is the third volume of the "Biography Today Author Series." Each volume contains alphabetically arranged sketches. Each entry provides at least one picture of the individual profiled with additional information about the birth, youth, early memories, education, first jobs, marriage and family, career highlights, memorable experiences, hobbies, and honors and awards. Each entry ends with a list of accessible sources designed to lead the student to further reading on the individual and a current address. Obituary entries also are included and clearly marked in both the table of contents and at the beginning of the entry. Profiles in this volume include: (1) Candy Dawson Boyd, author of "Circle of Gold," "Charlie Pippin," "Fall Secrets," and "A Different Beat," (2) Ray Bradbury, novelist and author of "The Martian Chronicles" and "Fahrenheit 451"; (3) Gwendolyn Brooks, poet and first African American to win the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry; (4) Ralph W. Ellison, novelist and author of "Invisible Man"; (5) Louise Fitzhugh, writer, illustrator, and author of "Harriet the Spy"; (6) Jean Craighead George, writer and illustrator, author of "My Side of the Mountain" and "Juliet of the Wolves"; (7) E. L. Konigsburg, author of "From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler" and "The View from Saturday"; (8) C. S. Lewis, author of the Narnia Chronicles; (9) Frederick L. McKissack and Patricia C. McKissack, writers of fiction and nonfiction children's books and creators of award-winning books that celebrate African American life; (10) Katherine Paterson, author of "The Master Puppeteer," "Bridge to Terabithia," "The Great Gilly Hopkins," and "Jacob I Have Loved"; (11) Anne Rice, Gothic novelist and author of "The Vampire Chronicles"; (12) Shel Silverstein, poet, author, creator of "Where the Sidewalk Ends," "A Light in the Attic," and "Falling Up"; and (13) Laura Ingalls Wilder, children's author and creator of the "Little House" books. (EH)

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Vol. 3
1997

Biography Today

Profiles of People of Interest to Young Readers

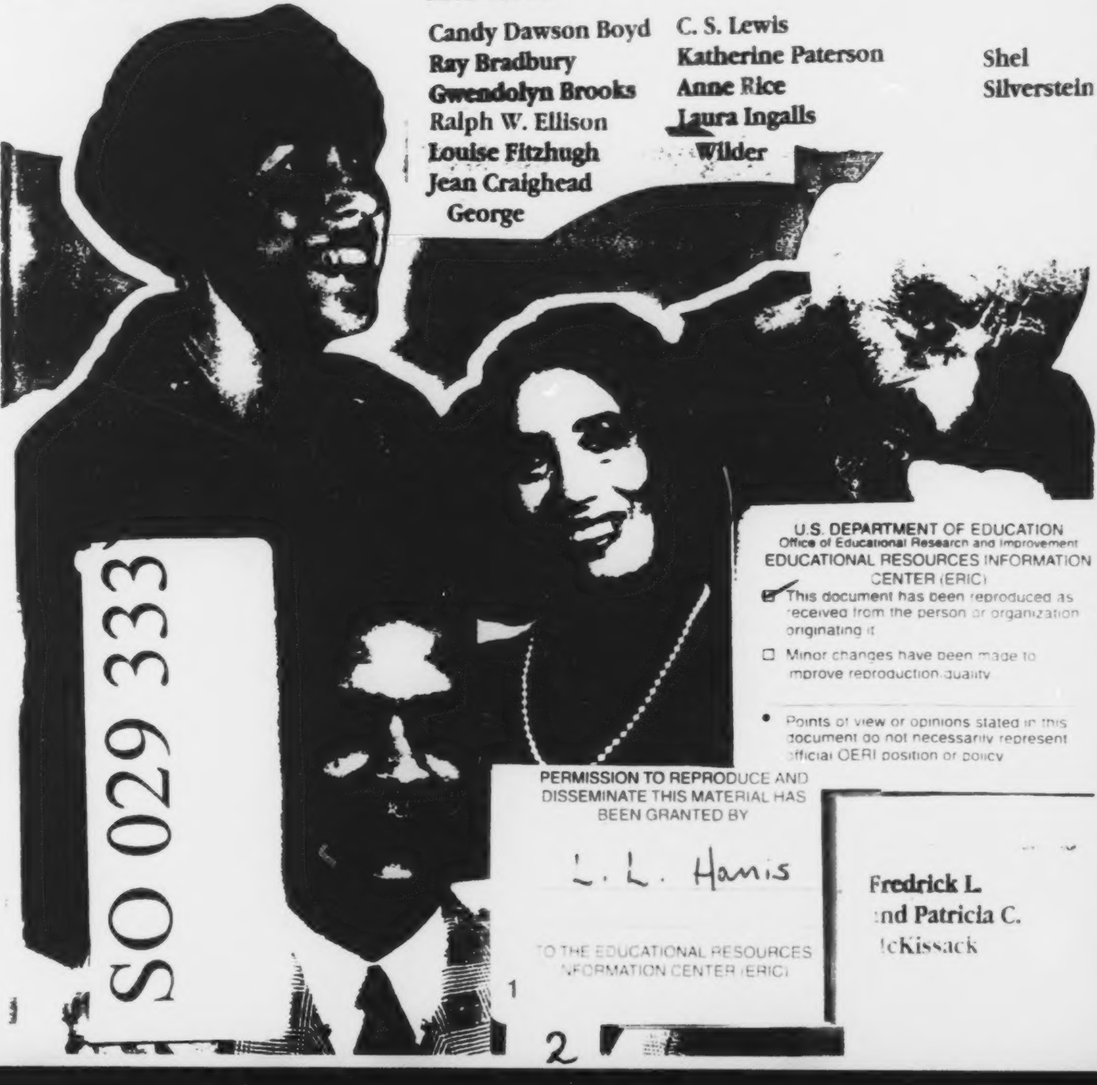
ED 460 907

Author Series

Featured in this issue . . .

E.L. Konigsburg

Candy Dawson Boyd
Ray Bradbury
Gwendolyn Brooks
Ralph W. Ellison
Louise Fitzhugh
Jean Craighead George
C. S. Lewis
Katherine Paterson
Anne Rice
Laura Ingalls Wilder
Shel Silverstein



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L. L. Harris

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Biography Today

Profiles of People of Interest to Young Readers

Author Series

Volume 3
1997

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Contents

Preface 5

Candy Dawson Boyd 1946- 9
American Writer and Teacher and Author of *Circle of Gold, Charlie Pippin, Fall Secrets,* and *A Different Beat*

Ray Bradbury 1920- 19
American Novelist, Short Story Writer, Playwright, Screenwriter, and Poet, Author of *The Martian Chronicles* and *Fahrenheit 451*

Gwendolyn Brooks 1917- 32
American Poet and Writer, First African-American to Win the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry

Ralph W. Ellison 1914-1994 44
American Novelist, Short Story Writer, and Essayist, Author of *Invisible Man*

Louise Fitzhugh 1928-1974 56
American Writer and Illustrator of Children's Books, Author of *Harriet the Spy*

Jean Craighead George 1919- 65
American Writer and Illustrator of Novels and Books on Natural History for Young Adults, Author of *My Side of the Mountain* and *Julie of the Wolves*

E.L. Konigsburg 1930- 78
American Writer for Children and Author of *From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler* and *The View from Saturday*

C. S. Lewis 1898-1963 90
Irish-Born English Scholar and Author of the Narnia Chronicles

Fredrick L. McKissack 1939-
Patricia C. McKissack 1944- 101
American Writers of Fiction and Nonfiction Books for Children and Creators of Award-Winning Books that Celebrate African-American Life

5

Katherine Paterson 1932- 115
American Writer for Children and Young Adults and Author of *The Master Puppeteer, Bridge to Terabithia, The Great Gilly Hopkins,* and *Jacob Have I Loved*

Anne Rice 1941- 126
American Gothic Novelist and Author of *The Vampire Chronicles*

Shel Silverstein 1932- 137
American Poet, Author, and Illustrator, Creator of *Where the Sidewalk Ends, A Light in the Attic,* and *Falling Up*

Laura Ingalls Wilder 1867-1957 144
American Children's Author and Creator of the "Little House" Books

Photo and Illustration Credits 157

Name Index 159

General Index 165

Places of Birth Index 187

Birthday Index (by month and day) 193

People to Appear in Future Issues 199

Preface

Welcome to the third volume of the **Biography Today Author Series**. We are publishing this series in response to the growing number of suggestions from our readers, who want more coverage of more people in *Biography Today*. Several new volumes, covering **Authors, Artists, Scientists and Inventors, Sports Figures, and World Leaders,** have appeared thus far in the Subject Series. Each of these hardcover volumes is 200 pages in length and covers approximately 14 individuals of interest to readers aged 9 and above. The length and format of the entries is like those found in the regular issues of *Biography Today,* but there is **no** duplication between the regular series and the special subject volumes.

The Plan of the Work

As with the regular issues of *Biography Today,* this special subject volume on **Authors** was especially created to appeal to young readers in a format they can enjoy reading and readily understand. Each volume contains alphabetically arranged sketches. Each entry provides at least one picture of the individual profiled, and bold-faced rubrics lead the reader to information on birth, youth, early memories, education, first jobs, marriage and family, career highlights, memorable experiences, hobbies, and honors and awards. Each of the entries ends with a list of easily accessible sources designed to lead the student to further reading on the individual and a current address. Obituary entries are also included, written to provide a perspective on the individual's entire career. Obituaries are clearly marked in both the table of contents and at the beginning of the entry.

Biographies are prepared by Omnigraphics editors after extensive research, utilizing the most current materials available. Those sources that are generally available to students appear in the list of further reading at the end of the sketch.

Indexes

To provide easy access to entries, each issue of the regular *Biography Today* series and each volume of the Special Subject Series contains a Name Index, General Index covering occupations, organizations, and ethnic and minority origins, Places of Birth Index, and a Birthday Index. These indexes cumulate with each succeeding volume or issue. Each of the Special Subject Volumes will be indexed as part of these cumulative indexes, so that readers can locate information on all individuals covered in either the regular or the special volumes.

Our Advisors

This member of the *Biography Today* family of publications was reviewed by an Advisory Board comprised of librarians, children's literature specialists, and reading instructors so that we could make sure that the concept of this publication — to provide a readable and accessible biographical magazine for young readers — was on target. They evaluated the title as it developed, and their suggestions have proved invaluable. Any errors, however, are ours alone. We'd like to list the Advisory Board members, and to thank them for their efforts.

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Our Advisory Board stressed to us that we should not shy away from controversial or unconventional people in our profiles, and we have tried to follow their advice. The Advisory Board also mentioned that the sketches might be useful in reluctant reader and adult literacy programs, and we would value any comments librarians might have about the suitability of our magazine for those purposes.

Your Comments Are Welcome

Our goal is to be accurate and up-to-date, to give young readers information they can learn from and enjoy. Now we want to know what you think. Take a look at this issue of *Biography Today,* on approval. Write or call me with your comments. We want to provide an excellent source of biographical information for young people. Let us know how you think we're doing.

And here's a special incentive: review our list of people to appear in upcoming issues. Use the bind-in card to list other people you want to see in *Biography Today*. If we include someone you suggest, your library wins a free issue, with our thanks. Please see the bind-in card for details.

Laurie Harris
Executive Editor, *Biography Today*

Candy Dawson Boyd 1946-

American Writer and Teacher
Author of *Circle of Gold, Charlie Pippin, Fall Secrets,* and *A Different Beat*

*[**Editor's Note:** Candy Dawson Boyd participated in an interview for this entry and generously contributed her time and much-needed information. We at* Biography Today *extend our thanks and appreciation.]*

BIRTH

Candy Dawson Boyd was born Marguerite Cecille Dawson on August 8, 1946, in Chicago, Illinois. Her father, Julian Dawson, was in charge of building inspection and permits for Baldwin

10

Park in California, and her mother, Mary Ruth (Ridley) Dawson, was a school teacher. Candy is the oldest of their three children, with a sister, Stephany, and a brother, Julian. Candy's parents divorced when she was about 11 years old.

YOUTH

Candy Dawson Boyd grew up on the South Side of Chicago. At that time in Chicago, in the late 1950s and 1960s, most neighborhoods were completely segregated, and hers was no exception. Her family lived in an African-American community that included people from all walks of life. According to Boyd, her neighborhood "was all black, but it wasn't a ghetto even though there was terrible segregation. I saw it as a neighborhood; my dentists and my doctors were black and lawyers were black, and there was a woman down the street who was nosy and watched all the children and told on them. I mean, my world was just overwhelmingly rich. My world was full of laughter and full of sadness and tragedy and things that were terribly scary but it was *rich* with stories."

Boyd's family was not poor, but not really comfortable either. In her words, "We were not middle class or wealthy. We got by." Despite their sometimes tough financial circumstances, Mary Ruth Dawson was determined to provide every opportunity for her children. "My mama was determined to give us what she called 'culture.' We would go to museums and art institutes and we would go to see plays at the Goodman Theater. There wasn't a lot of money so we would sit in Orchestra Hall in Chicago at the very top. Mama said this culture would help us make it in the world."

For Boyd, an awareness of racial issues came early. "[The] reality of segregation, grounded in the knowledge that I came from a people that . . . survived the most brutal form of slavery in history, formed the context of my life. Despite my 'fair' skin color, I was raised from an early age by both parents to see myself as black and to be proud of it."

As a teenager, in fact, Boyd began working for civil rights. A nearby middle-class neighborhood was predominantly white, but some black families were starting to move in. Real estate agents would prey on the white families' fears, telling them about all the terrible things that would happen when blacks moved into their neighborhood. The realtors would encourage them to sell their homes, and of course they made a nice profit off the white families' fears. Often when that happened in the past, the value of the houses would drop because so many houses were up for sale at one time. With so many families moving in and out, the neighborhood would become unstable. Once beautiful neighborhoods would start to degrade. Boyd hoped to prevent that. She organized three other girls to speak with the residents and convince them to stay. "All summer we went from home to home talking to the white families.

Eventually they all fled—driven out by fear and ignorance." Middle-class black families moved in, and the neighborhood maintained its lovely character.

EARLY MEMORIES

During her childhood, Boyd writes, "[There] weren't books about black children or their lives. At least I didn't find any. . . . On Saturdays I walked down 61st Street and under the El (elevated) train to the little public library. It was small, with two elderly black librarians and discarded books from the white libraries. But that precious library card was my ticket to the past and future. I ran to meet Heathcliff on the moors in [Emily Bronte's] *Wuthering Heights* although I had never seen a moor. I raised boys as Jo did in [Louisa May Alcott's] *Little Men* and *Jo's Boys*. I rode horses and lived in [Laura Ingalls Wilder's] *The Little House on the Prairie*. However, that was not enough.

"I never saw myself or my mama or my daddy in books. But as children, we blew bubbles on sunny summer mornings on the back porch, played school, worried about doing well on the long division test, and avoided broccoli and spinach and liver. We dreamed. We celebrated accomplishments. We lived rich, vibrant lives despite all of the adversities. I never saw any of that in books. Did I notice? Yes. Did it make me feel bad? Yes."

These experiences growing up, Boyd has said, later influenced her decision to become a writer.

EDUCATION

While attending the public schools in Chicago, which were still segregated at that time, Boyd had no idea that she would become a writer for children and a teacher. In fact, she says, "I didn't particularly like kids, and the thought of spending all day with them! . . . I remember thinking that I wouldn't be able to wear my make up or play my music or have fun or do anything! It seemed terrible to me." Instead, Boyd wanted to be a jazz singer or an actress. She joined the choir in high school, but discovered that she was tone deaf. She had more success with her acting, though, and won leading roles in several school plays.

But Boyd's mother was not enthusiastic about her plans to become an actress. Mary Ruth Dawson wanted Candy to become a teacher, a more stable profession, especially for a black woman. After graduating from Hirsch High School in 1962, Boyd enrolled at Northeastern Illinois State University, a predominantly white teachers' college in northwest Chicago. She had to ride the elevated train and the bus two hours each way, through all-white neighborhoods.

Partway through college, she dropped out to work in the civil rights movement. She became a field organizer with the Southern Christian Leadership

Conference (SCLC), the group founded by Dr. Martin Luther King. She worked in Chicago and Mississippi for the SCLC. As she recalls, "I faced mobs. I was hurt. I marched through the Klan's cattle prods and the fires of Gage Park in Chicago. And a part of me died when Malcolm X, Medgar Evers, Dr. King, Fred Hampton, and hundreds of others were murdered." Boyd decided to return to school, but she wanted to continue her work in the civil rights movement. She joined up with the teachers' division of Operation PUSH (People United to Save Humanity), a group started by Jessie Jackson. Boyd graduated from Northeastern Illinois State with a bachelor's degree (B.A.) in English in 1967.

Later, Boyd returned to school. She earned her master's degree (M.A.) from the University of California at Berkeley in 1978, and her doctoral degree (Ph.D.) in 1982.

FIRST JOBS

After earning her bachelor's degree, Boyd took her first job as an elementary school teacher in her own neighborhood in Chicago in 1968. She says she was a "militant teacher," bringing her civil rights activism into the classroom. She was determined to give her poor, black students the same opportunities that her mother had given her as a child. "Some of my [students] had never seen Lake Michigan. So we would meet by the liquor store on Saturdays and we would go downtown to the Goodman Theater and we took a Greyhound bus tour of Chicago. They became my children, and I wanted them."

In 1971 Boyd moved to Berkeley, California. After doing some extra course work, she began teaching there. Instead of just holding one teaching position, though, she worked in several positions simultaneously. From 1971 to 1973 she taught at Longfellow School, an elementary school in Berkeley. From 1973 to 1976 she was a teacher trainer in reading in the Berkeley school district. But at the same time she was also working at the college level. From 1972 to 1979 she was an instructor in language arts at University of California at Berkeley, where she was working on her master's degree and later, her doctorate. Also in 1972, she started teaching at St. Mary's College of California, a private Catholic college. She has continued teaching in the school of education since that time, starting out as an instructor and working her way up to assistant professor and then associate professor. Boyd became a full professor at St. Mary's College in 1991; she was the first African-American to receive tenure there. At St. Mary's, she has been the director of elementary education and the director of special education. Currently, she is a professor of graduate education and the director of the reading program, which she created, a specialized program to train educators to become specialists in reading instruction. In addition, she lectures nationally on issues relating to reading and language arts, multicultural literature, and cultural diversity.

BECOMING A WRITER

Throughout much of this time, Boyd was also becoming a writer. When she was first starting to teach in Chicago and later in Berkeley, she became frustrated with the reading materials that were available for her students. "There were few books about our people. Those that I was able to find depicted our neighborhoods as ghettos filled with gangs and fatherless families. I detested those books and the arrogant authors who wrote them. But I used them to teach my children about stereotypes and institutional racism. When I married and moved to Berkeley, California, I taught white, Latino, Asian, Indian, and African-American children from middle-class families for the first time. Suddenly the anger hit me again. I could not find enough books that explored their lives and cultures in positive, healthy, and real ways."

So Boyd decided to do something about it. She started out by spending two years reading all the children's books in the Berkeley Public Library. She read the whole children's collection—from A to Z. She also took classes in writing for children at UC-Berkeley. And then she started writing. She received rejection letters from publishers for nine years, until her first book, *Circle of Gold,* was published in 1984 by Scholastic.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

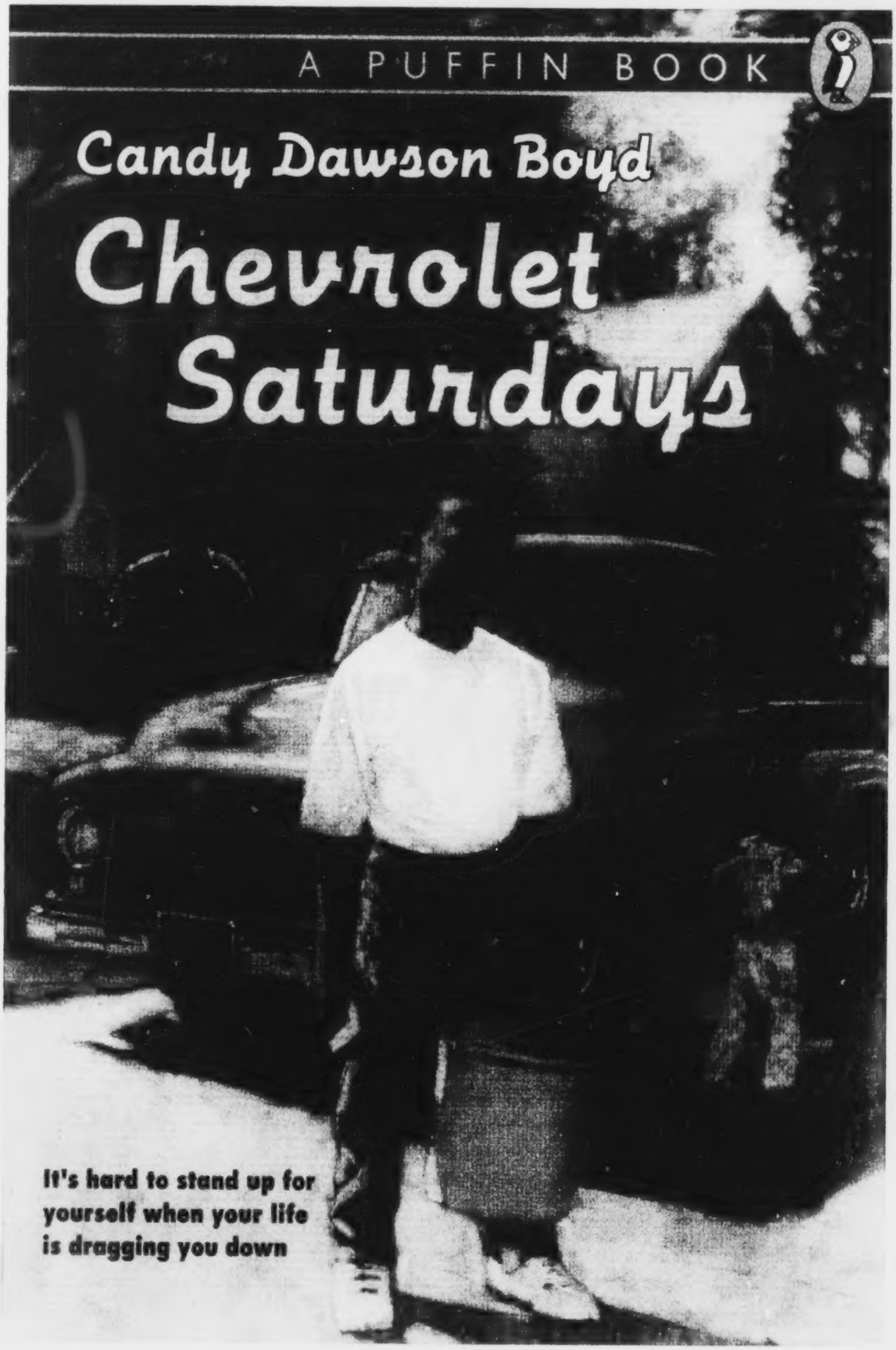
Boyd's novels for young readers, she says, focus on five main themes: "(1) responsibility for self and others, (2) choices visible and unknown, (3) risks taken and rejected, (4) role work and the value of elders, and (5) love as a force for good." Throughout her exploration of these themes she highlights the lives of African-Americans, for reasons that she explains here. "I know that my books will not put food into the mouths of 50 percent of our nation's poor: our children. I know that, alone, they will not save the lives of young African-American men living and dying in the hells of abandoned inner cities. I know that my stories will not, alone, enhance self-esteem or reduce racist attitudes and practices. I know this. . . . I realize that all African-American authors do not see our culture in the same way, but we all share the same undeniable reality: we are Black and living in America. That reality permeates every aspect of our conscious and unconscious lives. . . . African-American human beings are not simple, not easy to understand or know. We live in a world that white America knows little or nothing about. I know this, and my stories reflect this knowledge."

While many of Boyd's characters are African-Americans and their stories focus on specific racial issues, her novels show feelings and experiences that are common for many students, regardless of race: dealing with loss, from death, divorce, or other tragedies; living up to parents' expectations for success; creating new friendships; learning the importance of family; and learning to value one's own self as an individual. The lessons in Boyd's works are true for all races.

Boyd's first published novel, *Circle of Gold* (1984), tells Mattie's story. She's struggling with a bully at school, and her home life is difficult since her father died: her mother is always angry, her brother is quiet and withdrawn, and their family life is disintegrating. To make it worse, 11-year-old Mattie feels that her mother doesn't really love her. So she sets out to bring her family back together again. Part of her plan involves entering a Mother's Day writing contest sponsored by a local newspaper. Boyd has said that the novel was based, in part, on her own experiences growing up: she entered, and won, a writing contest sponsored by a Chicago newspaper when she was 12 and her parents had just divorced. "My mama worked very hard to keep our family together," she says, "and winning that contest was my way of saying 'Thank you, Mama.'" *Circle of Gold* won the Coretta Scott King Honor Award, a rare honor for an author's first novel.

Boyd went on to further success in her subsequent novels. In *Breadsticks and Blessing Places* (1985), which was later republished as *Forever Friends* (1986), Boyd tells about a young girl, Toni, who is struggling to adapt to a new, more difficult school. Toni is a character who had appeared earlier as Mattie's good friend in *Circle of Gold*, and Mattie figures here as a secondary character. When another friend is killed by a drunk driver, Toni's life starts to fall apart. *Breadsticks and Blessing Places* is a poignant story about her slow efforts to recover from the trauma and to rebuild her life. Actually, this was Boyd's first novel. For nine years Boyd tried to submit it to publishing houses but the book was always rejected; publishers said that the emphasis on death and grieving was too depressing for a children's book. *Breadsticks and Blessing Places* was accepted and published only after the success of *Circle of Gold*.

In her next book, *Charlie Pippin* (1987), Boyd tells the story of 11-year-old Charlie and her sometimes difficult relationship with her angry, bitter, and withdrawn father. For a school project, she decides to study the Vietnam War, which her father, a Vietnam veteran, has always refused to discuss with her. With that project, Boyd says, "[Charlie] embarks on a quest to learn more about what happened to her father and to help heal the hurt—a hurt that covers the entire family." In *Chevrolet Saturdays* (1993), Joey has several tough


A PUFFIN BOOK
Candy Dawson Boyd
Chevrolet Saturdays
It's hard to stand up for yourself when your life is dragging you down

situations to deal with—the divorce of his parents, his father's job transfer out of town, his mother's remarriage, his new stepfather, a class bully who's picking on him, and a difficult fifth-grade teacher who doesn't like him. The novel shows the difficulties and the joys as Joey, his mother, and his stepfather learn to pull together as a real family. *Chevrolet Saturdays,* Boyd has said, is probably her favorite among her works.

To follow that up, Boyd tried something a little different. She started work on a series that focuses on four middle-school girls of different ethnic and social backgrounds. Her first novel in the series was *Fall Secrets* (1994). Jessie, Addie Mae, Julie, and Maria are new sixth-grade students at Oakland Performing Arts Middle School (OPA), a prestigious school in Oakland, California. All are top students with a background in the performing arts: Jessie, who is African-American, studies acting; Addie Mae, who is also African-American, studies dance; Julie, who is white, studies violin; and Maria, who is Hispanic, studies piano. Thrown together in their first class in middle school, they struggle to become friends despite their very different experiences, their sometimes intense rivalries, and their efforts to hide certain secrets about their own lives. For Boyd, setting the novel in a school for the arts was key, as she told *Biography Today.* "I have very strong feelings about the critical place of the arts in the lives of children. . . . I have seen the arts save children and give children who would normally have little or no place in school a haven to thrive within and the kind of impetus that they needed to do well in all kinds of other subject areas. And so I wanted to showcase the arts because I think they're valuable, particularly in these times." In *Fall Secrets,* Jessie tries to adapt to her new school, do well in her classes, live up to her parents' high expectations, and handle the pressures of her new life. The novel also focuses on her strong family background and her loving but demanding parents.

In her next book, Boyd took a new approach. *Daddy, Daddy, Be There* (1995), a picture book illustrated by Floyd Cooper, is a lyrical tribute to fathers and their importance to their children. Her most recent work is *A Different Beat* (1996), a sequel to *Fall Secrets.* She picks up the story of Jessie, her family, and her friends at OPA, as Jessie learns to deal with a prejudicial teacher, tries to satisfy her father, and works out her stormy relationship with Addie Mae. By showing us the view point of these African-American middle-school students, Boyd brings life and immediacy to many real issues, particularly those involving race.

Currently, Boyd is taking a break from fiction writing. She is at work on a series of reading textbooks for McGraw Hill Publishers, to be used in school classrooms. She's not sure what she'll go on to next, although she's thinking about writing a novel for adults.

ADVICE FOR YOUNG WRITERS

When *Biography Today* asked Boyd for her advice for young writers, she was very frank. She disagrees with the prevailing attitude that it is easy to write children's books, what she calls a "well, anybody can do it" attitude. She points to "a hubris, a kind of arrogance about books for children" among the general public, which betrays a lack of respect both for children's writers and, ultimately, for children themselves. A good writer for children, Boyd believes, needs to do a lot of preparation to learn about existing children's books and to learn the craft of writing. "The craft is something that you are continually learning to do and to do well. It can't be taken for granted. I think that what has disturbed me more than anything is that I feel that when you respect the literature as a writer for children and young people that it is an indication to me that you respect [the reader]. . . . I would really say take two or three years and learn the field before you just thrust yourself out there and think that you can do it. Work hard on your craft. At this point I never approach a book with great confidence. I always approach it with a sense of care and an enormous, enormous sense of responsibility. If there is anything that is critical to me it is that I never write anything that could hurt a child or make them feel bad about themselves. I certainly think that there are writers who could care less about that, or who have not really thought about it, or who have been insensitive to the ways that language functions. Those are issues that for me are very, very important."

FAVORITE BOOKS

When asked about her favorite books, Boyd mentioned a few of her current favorites. She enjoys reading mysteries and suspense thrillers, including those by Stephen King, Dean Koontz, and John Grisham. She also enjoys the mysteries of Walter Mosely and the science fiction of Octavia Butler. One of her favorite authors is Toni Morrison, about whom Boyd says "what she does with language is just magical."

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

Candy Dawson Boyd has been married twice. She first married in 1971, and divorced after about three years. In 1979 she married Robert Boyd, a telecommunications specialist with a major bank. They had one son, Robert Julian Boyd, who died. Robert and Candy Dawson Boyd later divorced. She currently lives in northern California.

WRITINGS

Circle of Gold, 1984
Breadsticks and Blessing Places, 1985 (republished as *Forever Friends*, 1986)
Charlie Pippin, 1987
Chevrolet Saturdays, 1993
Fall Secrets, 1994
Daddy, Daddy, Be There, 1995
A Different Beat, 1996

HONORS AND AWARDS

Notable Children's Book (National Council for Social Studies): 1984, for *Circle of Gold*
Children's Books of the Year List (Bank Street College): 1985, for *Breadsticks and Blessing Places*
Children's Choices for 1988 List (International Reading Association — Children's Book Council): 1988, for *Charlie Pippin*
Notable Book (American Library Association): 1988, for *Charlie Pippin*
Professor of the Year Award (St. Mary's College of California): 1992
Pick of the Lists (American Bookseller's Association): 1993, for *Chevrolet Saturdays*

FURTHER READING

Black Authors and Illustrators of Children's Books: A Biographical Dictionary, 2nd edition, 1992
Black Writers, 2nd edition, 1994
Contemporary Authors, Vol. 138
School Library Media Annual, Vol. 9, 1991
Something about the Author, Vol. 72

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Author of *The Martian Chronicles* and *Fahrenheit 451*

BIRTH

Ray Douglas Bradbury was born in Waukegan, Illinois, on August 22, 1920. He was the third child of Leonard Spaulding Bradbury, a telephone lineman for the Waukegan Bureau of Power and Light, and Esther (Moberg) Bradbury, whose family had emigrated from Sweden when she was a very young child. Esther Bradbury gave birth to twin boys, Leonard and Samuel, in 1916, but Samuel died two years later. Ray came next, and a fourth child, Elizabeth, was born in 1926. She died of pneumonia when Ray was seven. Only the two boys were left: Leonard, who was called Skip, and Ray, who was called Shorty.

YOUTH

Bradbury was an extremely imaginative child who was haunted by his fears. He claims he has "almost total recall, back to the hour of my birth." He says he can remember nightmares he had in his crib during the first few weeks of his life. Although psychologists say that this is impossible, Bradbury insists on the vividness of these early memories and their impact on his writing. Other childhood memories include seeing the silent film version of *The Hunchback of Notre Dame,* starring Lon Chaney, which Bradbury watched when he was only three years old. Afterward, he remembers "walking strangely for days." Three years later his mother took him to see Chaney in *The Phantom of the Opera.* These movies both frightened and fascinated the young Bradbury, who was already afraid of the dark and tormented by nightmares.

Bradbury was profoundly affected by the events of his childhood, which he later used as material for his stories, plays, and novels. For example, he was terrified of walking through the ravine near his house in Waukegan because he'd been told that a strange man called The Lonely One lived there. Such a character later appeared in *Dandelion Wine* (1957), a collection of stories about an adolescent boy growing up in a small town. The terror he felt when he witnessed a fire in his grandmother's house was the inspiration for his best known novel, *Fahrenheit 451.* And a terrible car crash that occurred across the street from a friend's house when he was young plays an important role in his 1990 novel, *A Graveyard for Lunatics.*

Bradbury was sick for three months with whooping cough when he was eight, and his mother helped him pass the time by reading him the frightening tales of Edgar Allan Poe by candlelight. This was also the age at which he discovered science fiction. He read every issue of *Amazing Stories* and amassed a huge collection of Buck Rogers comic strips. When he received a toy typewriter for Christmas in 1932, Bradbury began to write his own Buck Rogers stories, even though his friends ridiculed him for his obsession with space travel, at that time an outlandish, inconceivable notion. A visit to the 1933 World's Fair in Chicago with his Aunt Neva encouraged his futuristic fantasies. Aunt Neva, who was an artist and a theatrical costume designer, played a crucial role in shaping young Bradbury's interests, dressing him in monster costumes at Halloween and reading him the *Oz* books of Frank L. Baum. "All the worlds of art and imagination flowed to me through Neva," he later recalled.

Bradbury found some of those imaginative experiences in books. He was smaller than most kids, and his poor eyesight kept him from participating in sports. Instead, he spent much of his youth in Waukegan's Carnegie Library. He devoured the works of Jules Verne, H. G. Wells, Edgar Rice Burroughs, and other authors whose books dealt with fantasy and the supernatural.

In 1932, in the midst of the Depression, Bradbury's father lost his job and moved the family to Tucson, Arizona, in hopes of finding work. Bradbury was 12. Even though they only stayed there for a short period of time, it is likely that this early exposure to the desert and the "alien" culture of the Southwest helped shape his ideas about life on Mars, the subject of his first best-seller, *The Martian Chronicles.* In 1933 the family returned to Waukegan for a while and then moved the following year to Los Angeles, where Bradbury became a passionate fan of the movies. He rollerskated 10 miles to the gates of Paramount Studios every afternoon to get the autographs of famous film stars. Although his father was often out of work and the family even went on welfare for a short period of time, Bradbury remembers his childhood as a happy one.

MEMORABLE EXPERIENCES

As a young boy, Bradbury loved circuses and carnivals. In 1932 he went to see the Dill Brothers Carnival in Waukegan, which featured a magician named Mr. Electrico. He sat in an electric chair while his assistant threw a switch that supposedly sent "ten million volts" of electricity through his body. His white hair stood on end, his eyes blazed, and sparks sizzled between his teeth. In a moment that Bradbury would never forget, Mr. Electrico touched the 12-year-old boy with his electric sword on both shoulders and proclaimed, "Live forever!" Afterward, he took Bradbury on a behind-the-scenes tour, showing him how static electricity could be used to make hair stand up and introducing him to the fat lady, the tattooed man, and the trapeze artists. Bradbury went home in a state of high excitement and began writing stories a short time afterward. In fact, many of the stories that were eventually collected in *The Illustrated Man* (1951) were inspired by his carnival experiences.

EDUCATION

After attending a number of different elementary schools in Waukegan and Tucson, Bradbury entered Berendo Junior High in Los Angeles and then Los Angeles High School, where he was active in the school drama group and the poetry club. He was so successful in his high school drama productions that for a while he thought he might become a professional actor. A straight-A student by the end of his senior year, Bradbury excelled in drama, astronomy, journalism, and short-story writing. Bradbury graduated from Los Angeles High School in June 1938. The family was so broke at that point that they couldn't buy a new suit for his graduation. He had to wear a jacket full of bullet holes that had belonged to an uncle who was killed in a hold-up. But

Bradbury had made his mark. The caption under his photograph in the high school yearbook says, "Headed for literary distinction." But no one at Los Angeles High School—except, perhaps, for Bradbury himself—realized just how quickly literary fame and fortune would arrive.

FIRST JOBS

When Bradbury graduated from high school, it was the depths of the Depression. His father was still out of work and the family had no money to send him to college, so he got a job selling newspapers on a street corner in downtown Los Angeles for $10 a week. This job lasted from 1938 until 1942. By that time, the United States was involved in World War II (1939-1945), but Bradbury was excused from military service because of his poor eyesight. Instead, he wrote radio "spots" for the Red Cross and scripts for the Los Angeles Department of Civil Defense. Throughout this time he was also spending time at the library, going three or four times a week for several hours at a time. He read everything—plays, poetry, novels, short stories. And at the same time, he was getting his start as a writer.

BECOMING A WRITER

In the late 1930s Bradbury began attending meetings of the Los Angeles chapter of the Science Fiction League. By 1941 he was writing one story each week—write the rough draft on Monday, revise the story on Tuesday through Friday, finish the final draft by Saturday, and take Sunday off. He would share his work with the writers at the Science Fiction League, who would read and criticize his work. One such writer was Henry Hasse, with whom he wrote what would be his first professionally published story. Bradbury sold his first story, "Pendulum," by his 21st birthday. Although he had to split the payment—$27.50—with his co-author, this early commercial success persuaded him to abandon his dreams of an acting career in favor of writing. When his family moved in 1941 to Venice, California, he set up a workroom in the house and began spending every Sunday at Muscle Beach going over his stories with science fiction writer Leigh Brackett. His first published story as the sole author, "The Piper," appeared in February 1943. By the time he was 23 years old, Bradbury was earning his living as a full-time writer, with his stories appearing in such magazines as *Weird Tales, Amazing Stories, Captain Future,* and *Astounding Science Fiction.*

Bradbury's stories didn't fit the "formula" that most science fiction editors were looking for at the time. So he tried writing for detective and suspense magazines. But science fiction—which for Bradbury had more to do with people than it did with spaceships and high technology—remained his primary focus.

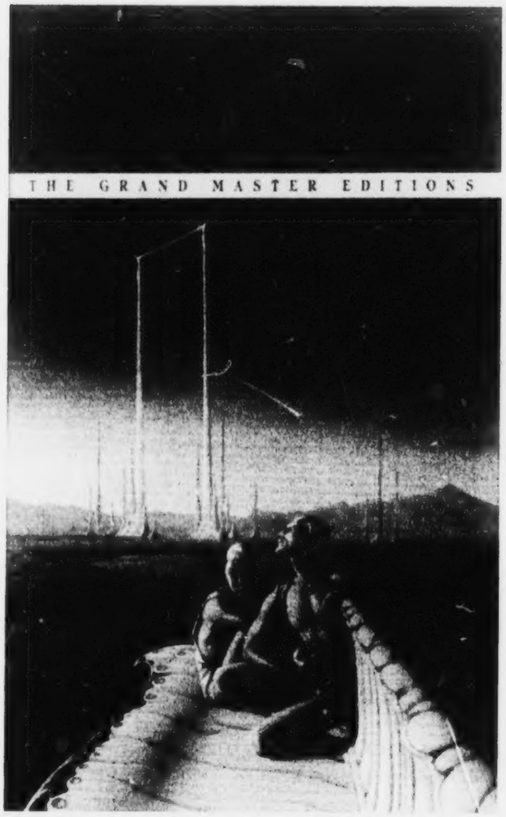
CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

Bradbury has been an extremely prolific writer during his over 50-year career as an author. He is perhaps best known for some of his earliest works, including the short stories and novels *The Martian Chronicles, Fahrenheit 451, Dandelion Wine,* and *Something Wicked This Way Comes.* Yet he has also written prodigious amounts of plays, musicals, screenplays, and poetry.

Bradbury's earliest works were short stories, a form in which he had excelled since his school days. After selling these stories first to the "pulp" magazines (named for the cheap paper on which they were printed) and later to the "slicks" (more prestigious magazines, printed on shiny paper), he published his first story collection, *Dark Carnival* (1947). According to Bradbury, this collection of tales of horror and the supernatural "got all of [my] night-sweats and terrors down on paper."

The Martian Chronicles

Three years later, Bradbury pulled together 26 stories he had written about the planet Mars, wrote some transitional passages to link them together, and published the resulting narrative as *The Martian Chronicles* in 1950. The book tells the story about a materialistic group from Earth that is colonizing Mars. In the process, they exploit and destroy the gentle, telepathic Martians and their idyllic civilization. *The Martian Chronicles* marked a turning point for Bradbury's career and an important landmark in the history of science fiction. Many readers saw it as both space fantasy and social criticism, a profound exploration of some of the issues that were troubling America at the time: pollution, fear of nuclear war, problems with racism and censorship, and the yearning for a simpler life. Within two years the book had gone through six printings and had firmly established his reputation as the master of an entirely new kind of science fiction.



Yet from the very beginning, Bradbury objected to being labeled a "science fiction writer." He asked his publisher to remove the "science fiction" label from all future editions of *The Martian Chronicles* and from his second collection of short stories, *The Illustrated Man*. He felt that labeling his works this way would prevent them from reaching an even wider audience, since science fiction at the time was often looked down upon by readers and publishers of more "serious" literature. Unlike other science fiction, though, Bradbury's stories were filled with poetic language and appealing characters, and his books addressed serious issues.

Fahrenheit 451

Bradbury's first novel was *Fahrenheit 451* (1953). Bradbury has called *Fahrenheit 451* a "dime novel" because he wrote the first draft in the basement typing room of the library at the University of California at Los Angeles, where he rented a typewriter for ten cents a half-hour. It took him nine days and cost $9.80 to turn out 25,000 words.

Named after the temperature at which paper bursts into flame, *Fahrenheit 451* is a passionate indictment of censorship and a society that limits ideas and stifles thought. The novel is set in a future totalitarian society where the written word is forbidden and books are burned. A group of rebels memorizes entire works of literature and philosophy so they will not be forgotten. Montag, the central character, is a book-burning fireman who becomes an outlaw reader. For Bradbury, Montag represents the author's lifelong passion for books and libraries. Published in 1953, it was later released as a major film, directed by François Truffaut. In 1993, on the 40th anniversary of the publication of *Fahrenheit 451*, commentator Fredric Koeppel remarked on its contemporary flavor and disturbing relevance. "What strikes us reading the book 40 years after its first publication, . . . [what] moves and frightens, in an age when fairy tales and the Bible and *Huckleberry Finn* are deemed censorable, is Bradbury's prescience."

Two of his many other books from this time deserve mention. Bradbury's novel *Dandelion Wine* (1957) is considered his most autobiographical work. In a series of linked sketches derived from the author's childhood in Waukegan, Illinois, Bradbury tells the story of 12-year-old Douglas Spaulding and his "magic summer" in Green Town. Critics have called *Dandelion Wine* a lyrical evocation of life in small-town America in the early part of the 20th century. Many especially praised his style for combining poetic imagery with colloquial rhythm. *Something Wicked This Way Comes* (1962) is Bradbury's own favorite among his books. Like *Dandelion Wine*, it is set in Green Town. It tells the story of two boys, Will Halloway and Jim Nightshade, when a black-magic carnival comes to town. The boys are overwhelmed by the evil forces that run the carnival. But they are rescued by Will's father, who uses love and laughter to vanquish evil and save the boys' souls. *Something Wicked This Way Comes* is also an autobiographical tale, as Bradbury explains here: "Everyone in the [story] is me—at 12, at 40, at 60. They are all some part of my subconscious, acting out the temptations which come at each age."

Movies and Television

Bradbury has loved movies since his high school days, when he routinely saw three or four double features a week. Even then he knew that some day he wanted to write screenplays. By the mid-1950s he got his chance. After publishing his first few books he felt confident enough to approach the noted director John Huston, who was Bradbury's idol. Huston hired him to write the screenplay for *Moby Dick,* which was released by Warner Brothers in 1956. Bradbury spent six months in Ireland working on the script, an experience that he wrote about more than 30 years later in his fictionalized memoir, *Green Shadows, White Whale* (1992). When he returned from Ireland to the States, Bradbury began writing scripts for such popular television shows of the 1950s as *Suspense, The Alfred Hitchcock Show, Jane Wyman's Fireside Theatre,* and *The Twilight Zone.*

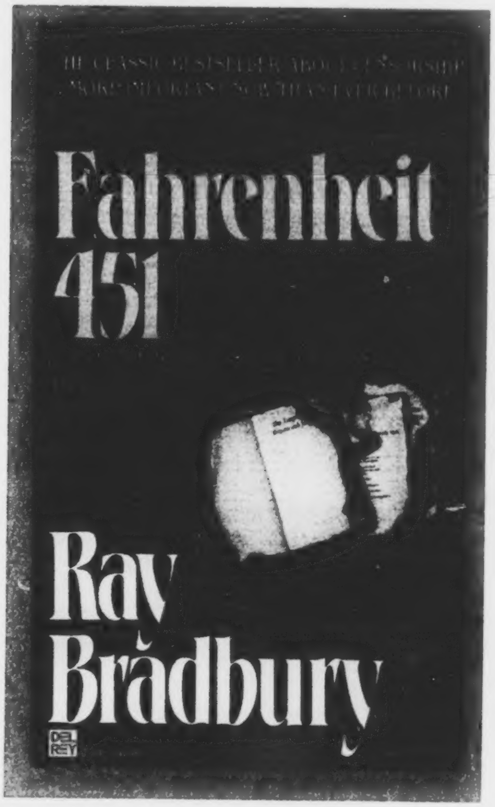
Master of Many Forms

Bradbury has been extremely prolific over the years. In addition to his novels, he has published more than 500 short stories and hundreds of teleplays, stage plays, radio plays, essays, and nonfiction books and articles. He has also written operas, a cantata, a teachers' guide to science fiction, and the narration for a documentary film shown at the 1964 New York World's Fair. Few people realize that he is also a prolific poet, the author of eight volumes of verse. Bradbury claims that poetry has always played an important role in his writing, and that many of his short stories have been inspired by a single line of poetry.

Bradbury has also devoted much of his time over the past three decades to writing and staging plays, and he has adapted two of his works as musicals: *The Wonderful Ice Cream Suit* and *Dandelion Wine.* He has also continued his interest in movies and television. In 1983, he wrote the screenplay for *Something Wicked This Way Comes.* Starring Jason Robards, the film became a cult classic. He went on to write dozens of television scripts and serve as host for the "Ray Bradbury Television Theatre," a show that ran first on HBO and then on the USA cable network between 1985 and 1992.

Recent Projects

Now 77 years old, Bradbury still wakes up at six or seven o'clock in the morning because he hears voices telling him what to write. He continues to put in 14-hour days at his old IBM typewriter. His most recent book is *Driving Blind*



(1997), a collection of short stories. The title was inspired by a dream. Bradbury, who doesn't drive, was a passenger in a car being driven along a country road by his muse, who was wearing a blindfold. In the dream, he had to decide between seizing control of the car—or trusting his muse. He is currently at work on a new novel about vampires, tentatively titled *From the Dust Returned*. In addition, he gives about 50 lectures a year. He recently completed a script for a new film adaptation of *Fahrenheit 451*, in which Mel Gibson is slated to play the main character.

Despite his lifelong obsession with the future, Bradbury generally distrusts technology and has never learned to drive a car. He remains, however, fascinated by futuristic architecture and city planning, and has recently been involved in the design of three California shopping malls. Bradbury's lifelong support of the U.S. space program has led to his participation in the design of the "Spaceship Earth" exhibit at Disney's Epcot Center and the space rides at EuroDisney. He has also worked on developing "The Martian Chronicles Adventure CD-ROM," a computer game that picks up the story where his 1950 book left off. It is ironic that Bradbury's novel should end up as a computer game, since he doesn't have a home computer and refuses to write on one. "Someone gave me one years ago, but it made mistakes, so I got rid of it," he claims.

Response to His Work

Bradbury has had a profound influence on the role of science fiction in our culture. Popular shows like "Star Trek" and "The X-Files" owe a great deal to his influence. When Bradbury started writing, most science fiction stories focused on the clever gadgets and fantastic machines dreamed up by the authors. Little emphasis was placed on the writing itself, and the characters were drawn only superficially. But Bradbury changed all that. His richly imaginative prose style had more in common with poetry than scientific manuals, and his books were filled with literary metaphors and interesting characters as well as ingenious contraptions. He also explored compelling themes and posed challenging questions about the future of humankind and the role of technology — the kinds of issues that only serious novelists had dared to confront before. Readers' interest in Bradbury's fiction about life on other planets was enhanced by the success of the U.S. space program. His literate, deeply philosophical stories engaged readers and brought a greater respect to science fiction writing as a whole. By the 1970s science fiction was being taught as a subgenre of literature on college campuses across the country. Today many credit Bradbury, more than any other writer, with bringing literary respectability to the genre of science fiction.

Bradbury's work has always had broad popular appeal, especially among young people. *Fahrenheit 451* is now required reading in many high schools, and students and adults respond enthusiastically to his interest in the future and his fascination with the supernatural. His stories have appeared in many national magazines, including *The New Yorker, Saturday Review, Harper's,* and *Mademoiselle.* Yet because he is regarded primarily as a writer of science fiction his work has been largely ignored by literary critics. Science fiction purists, on the other hand, object to his emphasis on telling a good story rather than describing high-tech gadgetry. For Bradbury, the answer is simple. "I want to have fun with science," he once said. "I don't want to know how to build a rocket ship; I want to know what can happen when people fly them. It's the people I'm interested in."

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

In 1946 Bradbury met Marguerite (Maggie) McClure, a UCLA graduate, in Fowler's Bookshop, where she was working as a clerk. Maggie's friends warned her that her new boyfriend had no future, but Bradbury himself felt differently: "I said to her, 'I'm going to the moon. I'm going to Mars. Do you want to come along?'" Maggie said yes, and they were married on September 27, 1947. The Bradburys have four daughters: Susan, born in 1949; Ramona, born in 1951; Bettina, born in 1955; and Alexandra, born in 1958. Currently, Bradbury and his wife still live in the Los Angeles area. They enjoy spending time with their four cats and eight grandchildren.

MAJOR INFLUENCES

Two of Bradbury's earliest influences were Jennet Johnson, who taught the short-story writing class at Los Angeles High School, and Snow Longley Housh, who taught poetry there. He describes the impact of these teachers as "immense and lasting." Bradbury also singles out science fiction writer Leigh Brackett, who worked with him every Sunday afternoon for five years on the beach in Santa Monica, where she played volleyball.

ADVICE TO YOUNG WRITERS

Bradbury is a firm believer in self-education: "Once you've found your best subject, you don't necessarily need a class or other formal training to learn to write," he tells young writers. "You don't need a teacher—you just need to run wild in a library." He also advises them to choose a subject that they're passionate about: "Latch onto something that you love so much you've got to write about it. You can't write about things you don't care about, and you can't write about things that you don't truly know."

SELECTED WRITINGS

Short Story Collections

Dark Carnival, 1947
The Illustrated Man, 1951
The Golden Apples of the Sun, 1953
The October Country, 1955
Sun and Shadow, 1957
A Medicine for Melancholy, 1959
The Ghoul Keepers, 1961
The Small Assassin, 1962
The Machineries of Joy, 1964
The Vintage Bradbury, 1965
The Autumn People, 1965
Tomorrow Midnight, 1966
I Sing the Body Electric! 1969
Whispers from Beyond, 1972
Long After Midnight, 1976
The Mummies of Guanajuato, 1978
The Last Circus and the Electrocution, 1980
Stories of Ray Bradbury, 1980
Dinosaur Tales, 1983
A Memory of Murder, 1984
The Toynbee Convector, 1988
Vintage Bradbury, 1990
The Smile, 1991
Quicker Than the Eye, 1996
Driving Blind, 1997

Novels

The Martian Chronicles, 1950
Fahrenheit 451, 1953

Dandelion Wine, 1957
Something Wicked This Way Comes, 1962
Death Is a Lonely Business, 1985
A Graveyard for Lunatics, 1990
Green Shadows, White Whale, 1992

For Younger Readers

Switch on the Night, 1955
R is for Rocket, 1962
S is for Space, 1966
The Halloween Tree, 1972
The April Witch, 1987
The Other Foot, 1987
The Foghorn, 1987
The Veldt, 1987
Fever Dream, 1987

Plays and Musicals

The Meadow, 1960
The Anthem Sprinters and Other Antics, 1963
The World of Ray Bradbury, 1964
The Day It Rained Forever, 1966
The Pedestrian, 1966
Dandelion Wine, 1967
Christus Apollo, 1969
The Wonderful Ice Cream Suit and Other Plays, 1972
Madrigals for the Space Age, 1972.
Pillar of Fire and Other Plays, 1975
A Device Out of Time, 1986
Falling Upward, 1988

Films

It Came From Outer Space, 1953
Moby Dick, 1956 (with John Huston)
Icarus Montgolfier Wright, 1962 (with George C. Johnson)
Picasso Summer, 1972 (with Ed Weinberger)
Something Wicked This Way Comes, 1983

Essays

Zen and the Art of Writing, 1973
Yestermorrow: Obvious Answers to Impossible Futures, 1991
Journey to Far Metaphor: Further Essays on Creativity, Writing, Literature, & the Arts, 1994

Poetry

Old Ahab's Friend, and Friend to Noah, Speaks His Piece, 1971
When Elephants Last in the Dooryard Bloomed, 1973
Where Robot Mice and Robot Men Run 'Round in Robot Towns, 1977
The Haunted Computer and the Android Pope, 1981
The Complete Poems of Ray Bradbury, 1982
The Last Good Kiss, 1984
Death Has Lost Its Charm for Me, 1987
A Climate of Palettes, 1988

HONORS AND AWARDS

O. Henry Memorial Award: 1947, for "Homecoming"
Benjamin Franklin Magazine Award: 1954, for "Sun and Shadow"
The National Institute Award in Literature (National Institute of Arts and Letters): 1954, for contribution to American literature
Boys Club of America Junior Book Award: 1956, for *Switch on the Night*
Golden Eagle Film Award for Screenwriting: 1963, for *Icarus Montgolfier Wright*
Robert Ball Memorial Award (Aviation and Space Writers Association): 1968, for "An Impatient Gulliver Above Our Roots"
Valentine Davies Award (Writers Guild of America, West): 1974
Life Achievement Award (World Fantasy Convention): 1977
Hugo Award (World Science Fiction Society): 1980, as Grand Master (Gandalf Award)
Jules Verne Award: 1984
Home Box Office Ace Award for Writing a Dramatic Series: 1985, for "Ray Bradbury Theater"
Body of Work Award (PEN): 1985
Nebula Award (Science Fiction Writers of America): 1989, as Grand Master
Silver Award (U.S. National Commission on Libraries and Information Science): 1997

FURTHER READING

Books

Contemporary Authors, New Revision Series, Vol. 30
Dictionary of Literary Biography, Vols. 2 and 8
Encyclopedia Britannica, 1996
Mogen, David. *Ray Bradbury,* 1986 (juvenile)
Nolan, William F. *The Ray Bradbury Companion,* 1975
Something About the Author, Vol. 64
Who's Who in America, 1997
World Book Encyclopedia, 1997

Periodicals

Baltimore Morning Sun, Feb. 7, 1996, p.E1
Chicago Tribune, June 20, 1993, Tempo Lake section, p.1
Christian Science Monitor, Mar. 20, 1991, Home Forum section, p.16
Current Biography 1982
Los Angeles Times, Aug. 19, 1995, Calendar section, p.1
New York Times, Apr. 24, 1983, Section 2, p.1
Newsweek, Nov. 13, 1995, p.89
People, Nov. 24, 1980, p.89
Writer's Digest, Feb. 1986, p.26

ADDRESS

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Gwendolyn Brooks 1917-

American Poet and Writer
First African-American to Win the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry

BIRTH

Gwendolyn Elizabeth Brooks was born in Topeka, Kansas, on June 7, 1917. She was the first child of David Brooks, a janitor for a music publishing company, and Keziah (Wims) Brooks, a former elementary school teacher. Her mother had returned to her parents' house in Topeka to give birth to Gwendolyn. They remained in Kansas for about a month and then rejoined Gwendolyn's father in Chicago, where she was raised and where she has spent most of her life. Her brother, Raymond, was born 16 months later.

YOUTH

Although she grew up poor in the sprawling black ghetto on Chicago's South Side, Brooks was from a family that placed a high value on education and artistic pursuits. Her father had hoped to become a doctor, but he was forced to drop out of college after one year because he couldn't afford it. He always encouraged the children's education and read to them daily from his prized set of *Harvard Classics*. Her mother played the piano and composed songs and stories. Her younger brother, Raymond, showed an early interest in art and was always drawing or painting.

Gwendolyn herself was a shy and withdrawn young girl. Her favorite pastime was to sit on the back porch and watch the clouds as they passed over the row of tenements behind her family's small frame house. When she was 4 or 5, her mother taught her how to recite "with expression," and she began writing poetry at the age of 7. Her father gave her a big desk with lots of cubbyholes and a special shelf for the books that she loved to read. One of the first books she kept there was a volume of poetry by Paul Laurence Dunbar, the late 19th-century African-American poet. After Gwendolyn published her first poem at age 13 in *American Childhood,* a popular children's magazine, her mother was so confident that her daughter was going to grow up to be a writer that she announced, "*You* are going to be the *lady* Paul Laurence Dunbar!" She even excused her daughter from most household chores so that she would have more time to write.

Financially, life was a constant struggle for the Brooks family. Although they owned a house, they usually rented out the second floor. When David Brooks was laid off from his job at the McKinley Music Publishing Company during the Depression, the family ended up surviving on beans — a memory that later inspired Gwendolyn to write one of her most famous poems, "The Bean Eaters."

EDUCATION

It was in school that Brooks first experienced prejudice. She felt rejected by other African-American students because of her dark skin color. For many in the black community at that time, before the black pride movements of the 1960s, the standard of beauty was to look white. Kids with straighter hair and lighter skin tended to be more popular. She just didn't fit that image.

At Forrestville Elementary School in Chicago, Brooks was so shy and awkward that she seldom participated in school or social activities. In high school, she had so much trouble adjusting that she went to three different schools before finally settling into the racially mixed Englewood High School. Yet she had trouble there also. A mediocre student, Brooks spent more time brooding over her lack of friendships with other students than she did over her studies. She often felt hurt, convinced that other girls didn't like her because her father was a janitor and because her skin was darker than other African-Americans. Her one real pleasure as an adolescent was putting rhymes together in her notebooks, which she filled with meditations on love, nature, and death. By the time she graduated from Englewood High School in 1934, several of her poems had appeared in the *Chicago Defender,* a local black newspaper. Brooks knew then that she would continue to write poetry all her life.

Woodrow Wilson Junior College had just opened its doors when Brooks enrolled there as an English literature major in September 1934. She graduated two years later, marking the end of her formal education. But as an adult, she has received more than 50 honorary degrees from colleges and universities across the United States.

FIRST JOBS

After graduating from college, Brooks had hoped to find work at the *Chicago Defender.* When the job didn't come through, she accepted temporary employment as a maid in a home on the North Shore, the wealthiest section of Chicago. She lasted less than a month and hated the experience, which later inspired a chapter in her novel, *Maud Martha.*

Brooks's first real job was working as a secretary for Dr. E. N. French, a "spiritual adviser" who called himself a doctor. His office was in Chicago's rundown Mecca building, a former luxury apartment house where several hundred of the city's most destitute black families lived. Dr. French offered advice and magic potions to those who were out of work, looking for a mate, or struggling with personal or financial problems. Brooks's job was to write letters to his prospective "patients" and to package the various pills and potions that the "doctor" sold to the poor and the desperate. When Dr. French tried to make her his assistant, she refused and was fired. Brooks remembers her time with Dr. French as "the most horrible four months of my existence." She was exposed to a side of black life in Chicago that she might not otherwise have seen because her family, while poor, was never as destitute as those taken in by Dr. Finch's claims. Decades later, she drew on the experience for her poem, "In the Mecca."

Brooks joined the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) Youth Council in the late 1930s and ended up becoming its publicity director. "Those were some of my happiest days," she once wrote, "because I had never though I'd have a whole *bunch* of friends, people who seemed to like me and thought that there was something to me. . . . It was then that my beautiful social life began."

BECOMING A WRITER

Brooks never took a creative writing course in high school or college. But at the age of 24 she enrolled in a class for "Negro poets" at the South Side Community Art Center. Her teacher was Inez Stark Boulton, a wealthy white woman from the fashionable "Gold Coast" area of Chicago. Boulton was also an editor for *Poetry,* one of the most prestigious literary magazines in America. Brooks won first prize in a poetry contest conducted by the class, and this encouraged her to submit her work to a similar contest being held by the Midwestern Writers' Conference at Northwestern University. She won this contest in 1943, as well as top prize at the annual Writers' Conference in Chicago. By the mid-1940s, her work was appearing in *Poetry,* as well as other respected literary magazines like *Harper's,* the *Saturday Review of Literature,* and the *Yale Review.* Not yet 30 years old, Gwendolyn Brooks was becoming an established poet.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

For over 50 years now, Gwendolyn Brooks has been writing powerful, moving, and enlightening poetry. She has published a novel, a number of children's books, and a two-part autobiography, in addition to her volumes of verse. The winner of many major awards, she has also been a teacher and an inspiration to many aspiring writers.

Poet, Novelist, and Teacher

Brooks published her first collection of poems, *A Street in Bronzeville,* in 1945, the same year that she was named one of *Mademoiselle* magazine's "Ten Young Women of the Year." Often writing in traditional poetic forms like the sonnet, Brooks combined standard English with street talk and African-American dialect to produce a style that was, at that time, unique in American poetry. In this volume she introduced many of the themes that she has continued to explore, like the feelings of frustration and despair for those living in poverty and the effects of racism within the African-American community. Yet Brooks was such a good storyteller that she brought these issues to life in stories about real people. Her "city folk" poetry and her unsentimental descriptions of life among the urban poor in Bronzeville, Chicago's black ghetto, earned widespread praise. Critics greeted *A Street in Bronzeville* with enthusiastic acclaim and hailed Brooks as one of the most significant new poets of her generation.

Her second collection, *Annie Allen* (1949), was a sequence of poems about a young black girl from Bronzeville, tracing her growth to mature womanhood. The central poem is "The Anniad," a long coming-of-age poem about the heroine's marriage. "The Anniad," whose structure is derived from Virgil's

Aeneid, took the traditional epic form and used it in a modern way, presenting commonplace characters and situations in a traditional mock-heroic mode. Some black writers attacked *Annie Allen* for the "high tone" of its language, yet many others loved it. *Annie Allen* won the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry in 1950, making Brooks the first African-American to receive this honor. She was just 32. As a Pulitzer Prize winner, her public profile was raised considerably. Brooks was suddenly in demand for teaching jobs, book reviews, and public readings.

Brooks published her novel, *Maud Martha,* in 1953. It was written in the form of 34 short scenes or vignettes about the life of a young black girl growing up to adulthood in Chicago. Maud Martha, like the young Gwendolyn Brooks, thinks of herself as being ugly because of her dark skin, but she eventually stands up for her people by turning her back on a racist store clerk. The novel's characters and themes—which include family, racial, and marital tensions—mirror those in Brooks's poetry. *Maud Martha* won praise for its insightful depiction of the emotional depths of an apparently simple life.

WE REAL COOL

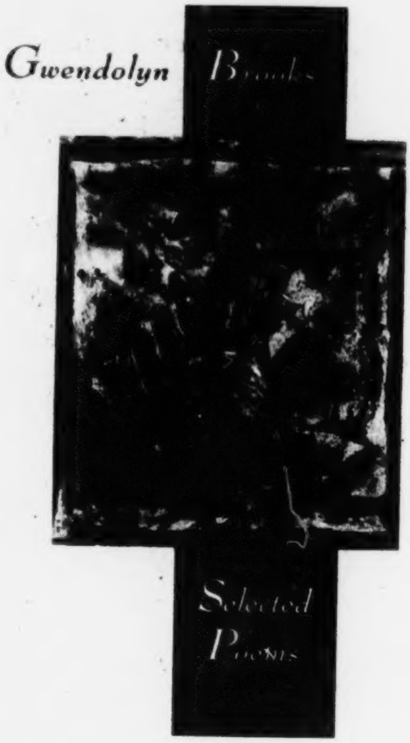
The Pool Players.
Seven at the Golden Shovel.

We real cool. We
Left school. We

Lurk late. We
Strike straight. We

Sing sin. We
Thin gin. We

Jazz June. We
Die soon.



Bronzeville Boys and Girls, published in 1956, was an illustrated book of short poems for children that described the everyday experiences and feelings of children who lived in the ghetto. Yet they "speak for any child of any race," according to Zena Sutherland and May Hill Arbuthnot. These poems "show a rare sensitivity to the child's inner life—the wonderments, hurts, and sense of make-believe and play." Brooks's third book of poems for adults, *The Bean Eaters* (1960), continued to explore the issues of racism, poverty, and violence. Among the more controversial poems in this volume was one about the 1955 death of Emmett Till, a 14-year-old African-American boy from Chicago who was beaten and shot for speaking to a white woman in Mississippi. For many, Emmett Till became one of the inspirations for the civil rights movement. *The Bean Eaters* also included one of Brooks's most powerful poems, "We Real Cool," which captures the confident attitude and bleak future of young black boys in urban America. "We Real Cool," which later was reprinted in *Selected Poems,* is often described as her signature piece.

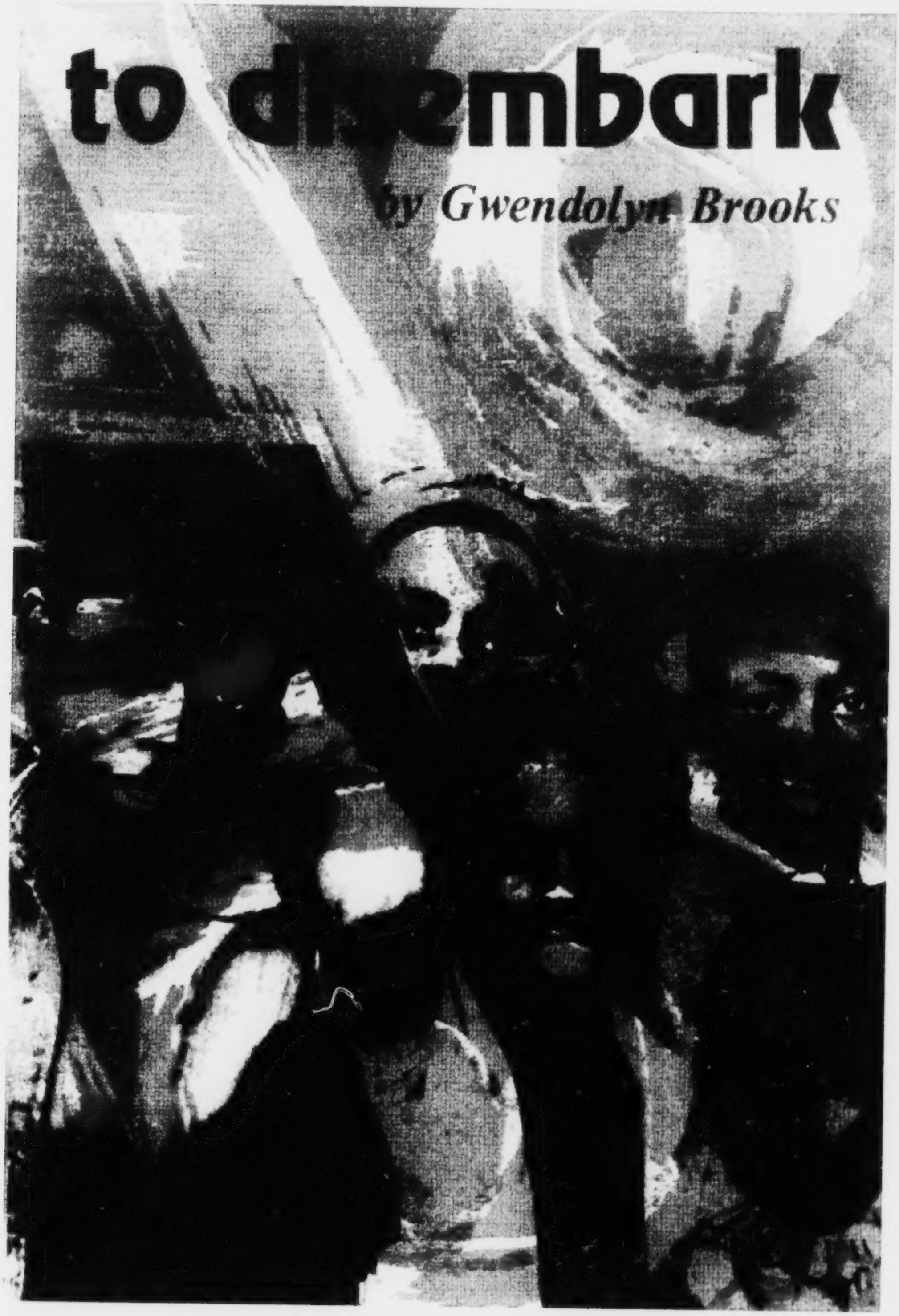
Her increasing fame as a poet brought Brooks a number of offers to teach. Starting in 1963, she conducted poetry and fiction workshops and taught freshman English and 20th-century literature at Columbia College, Elmhurst College, Northeastern Illinois State College, and the University of Wisconsin. Although she believed it was impossible to actually *teach* someone how to write, Brooks encouraged her students to "write earnestly and personally" from their own experiences.

A Turning Point

The year 1967 marked an important shift in Brooks's writing style as well as her subject matter. Although she had always written about the lives of poor, urban African-Americans, her poems up to this point were fairly traditional in form and language. But then she attended the second annual black Writers' Conference at Fisk University in Nashville, where she met a number of young activist writers like LeRoi Jones (who later took the African name Amiri Baraka) and Don L. Lee (who became Haki Madhubuti). They were part of the Black Arts movement, which was based on the belief that, in Brooks's words, "black poets should write as blacks, about blacks, and address themselves to blacks." Although Brooks had always written *about* her people, she hadn't always written *to* them.

Brooks describes her experience at Fisk as the awakening of her racial consciousness. She decided to develop a more accessible style of writing that would speak directly to blacks in the streets and in the halls of the housing projects. She stopped using traditional poetic forms and techniques and started writing free verse, which doesn't rhyme or follow a particular rhythmic scheme. Her new poems relied on jazz rhythms and often addressed race, injustice, and other issues of concern to blacks—a term Brooks still prefers over "African-Americans," which she has called "too polite."

She also took the bold and unprecedented step of ending a 25-year relationship with her publisher, Harper & Row. From 1969 on, she published all of


to disembark
by Gwendolyn Brooks

her books with African-American publishing firms, such as her friend Haki Madhubuti's Third World Press in Chicago and the poet Dudley Randall's Broadside Press in Detroit. This meant that her later books didn't always receive the publicity and critical attention given to her earlier books. But Brooks wanted to make an important political statement. Supporting black publishers was one way to demonstrate her commitment to the people of her race.

In the Mecca, published in 1968, reflects Brooks's increased concern with social and racial problems. The book's title poem, written in free verse, is about a mother who has lost her young daughter, Pepita, in the huge ghetto tenement known as the Mecca. She frantically searches the building for the lost child, getting little sympathy or support from her neighbors. Other poems in this volume deal with the death of the Black Muslim leader and activist Malcolm X and the dedication of a mural painted on a Chicago slum building. The themes of racial pride and black militancy are explored in a style and language that is direct and clear. *In the Mecca* was nominated for the prestigious National Book Award. In her subsequent work, *Riot* (1969), as in *In the Mecca,* she explored issues like black pride and the struggle for equality. *Riot,* which was later republished in *To Disembark* (1981), was commissioned by Madhubuti. Brooks created *Riot* in the aftermath of the 1968 assassination of Martin Luther King and the subsequent riots in African-American communities throughout the U.S.

In the 1970s, Brooks's works included two books for children. In *Aloneness* (1971), a single poem in free verse, she reveals a child's need to be alone. *The Tiger Who Wore White Gloves* (1974) is another children's poem with self-acceptance as its theme. It describes a tiger who wears white gloves to be fashionable but soon learns that tigers should be daring, not dainty. The 1980s saw the publication of *The Near-Johannesburg Boy and Other Poems* (1986) and *Winnie* (1988). In these books Brooks moves beyond urban America. She links African blacks to the inhabitants of Bronzeville, finding in their experiences a shared history of oppression. Her most recent book of poetry is *Children Coming Home* (1991). These poems talk about what it is like for young children coming home from school, as she explains: "Not all of the children come home to cookies and cocoa. Some come to crack cocaine." With its realistic poems on life's joys and sorrows, *Children Coming Home* has been hailed as an honest commentary on modern society.

Brooks has also published two volumes of autobiography. *Report from Part One* (1972) tells the story of Brooks's own life, from her Chicago childhood to her coming of age in the Black Arts movement. it was followed in 1996 by *Report from Part Two,* which includes the second half of her life story and many new poems.

Recent Activities

In 1985, at the age of 68, Brooks became the first African-American woman to be appointed to the post of Poetry Consultant to the Library of Congress (that post is now called Poet Laureate of the United States). She has also been the Poet Laureate of Illinois for almost 30 years, succeeding Carl Sandburg in that role. Recently, she has visited about 50 schools each year to read her poetry. In fact, encouraging children and young writers is one of her main interests. She organizes writers' workshops and poetry contests, often contributing the prize money herself. She travels widely, visiting poetry and art organizations, libraries, historical societies, and teachers' conferences. Currently, Brooks is also the writer-in-residence at Chicago State University, which opened The Gwendolyn Brooks Center for Black Literature and Culture in 1993.

To this day, Brooks continues to be recognized and applauded. In 1994, the National Endowment for the Humanities named Gwendolyn Brooks its Jefferson Lecturer, one of the federal government's highest awards in the humanities. The following year she won the National Medal of the Arts. She has also been recognized in such disparate ways as having schools named after her, having a bronze bust in her image placed in the National Portrait Gallery, and being honored by the Smithsonian Institution. But perhaps the way Brooks is honored most is by readers' enduring love of her work.

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

Gwendolyn Brooks met her husband, Henry Blakely, at an NAACP Youth Council meeting when they were both 21. As Blakely entered the room, Brooks said to her friend Margaret, "There is the man I am going to marry." They were married a year later in the living room of her parents' home. Their son, Henry, was born in 1940. A daughter, Nora, came along 11 years later.

Henry Blakely was a writer as well. In the early days of their marriage, he and Gwendolyn read books all night, wrote poetry together in the same room, read their work aloud to each other, and went to writers' workshops. Their modest apartment in a Chicago "kitchenette building" became a gathering place for other African-American writers, painters, musicians, actors, dancers, and photographers. Although their marriage was widely regarded as happy, Brooks separated from her husband in 1969. But Henry and Gwendolyn never divorced, and they reconciled in 1973, celebrating their golden wedding anniversary in 1989. Henry Blakely died in July 1996.

MAJOR INFLUENCES

Gwendolyn was very much influenced by Langston Hughes, a leading poet in the Harlem Renaissance literary movement. Hughes used the language of Harlem and "big city blacks" to portray the experiences of the African-American race. From him, Brooks learned how to use street language and characters in her poems, and she has often called Hughes her literary hero.

Gwendolyn actually met Langston Hughes when she was 16. Her mother took her to one of his readings at a church in Chicago. Afterward, her mother handed him a bunch of Gwendolyn's poems. Hughes read them on the spot, proclaiming that she had talent and should keep writing. Many years later, Brooks and her husband became friendly enough with Hughes to throw a party for him in their Chicago apartment.

SELECTED WRITINGS

Poetry

A Street In Bronzeville, 1945
Annie Allen, 1949
The Bean Eaters, 1960
Selected Poems, 1963
In the Mecca, 1968
Riot, 1969
Family Pictures, 1970
Beckonings, 1975
Primer for Blacks, 1980
To Disembark, 1981
The Near-Johannesburg Boy and Other Poems, 1986
Blacks, 1987
Winnie, 1988
Children Coming Home, 1991

For Younger Readers

Bronzeville Boys and Girls, 1956
Aloneness, 1971
The Tiger Wore White Gloves, 1974

Novels

Maud Martha, 1953

Autobiography

Report From Part One, 1972
Report From Part Two, 1996

Nonfiction

Young Poet's Primer, 1981
Very Young Poets, 1983

HONORS AND AWARDS

Ten Young Women of the Year (*Mademoiselle* magazine): 1945
Creative Writing Award (American Academy of Arts and Letters): 1946
Guggenheim Fellowship: 1946, 1947
Eunice Tietjens Memorial Prize (*Poetry* magazine): 1949, for *Annie Allen*
Pulitzer Prize in Poetry: 1950, for *Annie Allen*
Robert F. Ferguson Memorial Award (Friends of Literature): 1964, for *Selected Poems*
Poet Laureate of Illinois: 1968
Black Academy of Arts and Letters Award: 1971
Shelley Memorial Award (Poetry Society of America): 1976
Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress: 1985-86
National Women's Hall of Fame: 1988
Frost Medal (Poetry Society of America): 1989
Lifetime Achievement Award (National Endowment for the Arts): 1989
Jefferson Lecturer (National Endowment for the Humanities): 1994
Medal for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters (National Book Foundation): 1994
National Medal of the Arts: 1995

FURTHER READING

Books

Authors and Artist for Young Adults, Vol. 20
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de Montreville, Doris, ed. *Fourth Book of Junior Authors and Illustrators*, 1978
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Encyclopedia Britannica, 1996
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Tate, Claudia, ed. *Black Women Writers at Work*, 1983
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World Book Encyclopedia, 1996

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American Visions, Dec. 1988, p.32
Booklist, Oct. 15, 1993, p.426

Chicago Sun-Times, June 24, 1997, p.19
Chicago Tribune, June 6, 1997, Section 2, p.1
Current Biography 1977
Ebony, July 1968, p.48; June 1987, p.154
Washington Post, May 4, 1994, p.C1

ADDRESS

5530 South Shore Drive
Chicago, IL 60637

Ralph W. Ellison 1914-1994

American Novelist, Short Story Writer,
and Essayist
Author of *Invisible Man*

BIRTH

Ralph Waldo Ellison was born March 1, 1914, in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, to Lewis Alfred Ellison and Ida (Millsap) Ellison. His younger brother, Herbert, was born three years later. Ralph spent his entire childhood and youth in Oklahoma City, where his father operated a small ice and coal business and his mother —nicknamed "Brownie"—worked as a domestic in the homes of well-to-do white people.

Although they were poor and had little formal education, the Ellisons were politically active and literate people. Brownie helped recruit black voters for the Socialist party and was jailed several times for attempting to rent buildings that had been declared off-limits to blacks. Lewis Ellison loved to read. It was he who decided to name his first son after the American poet and philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson.

YOUTH

The Ellisons had come to Oklahoma just a few years after it became a state, and young Ralph benefited from growing up in a place where "frontier attitudes" prevailed. Because many of the new state's residents had come there to escape the racism they had experienced in the old slave states of the South, relations between blacks and whites tended to be more relaxed. The Ellisons lived in an integrated neighborhood and had many white friends, so Ralph never developed the feelings of distrust toward whites that were common among blacks who lived in racist areas.

Lewis Ellison died in an accident when Ralph was three and his younger brother was still an infant. His mother worked hard to support her sons and to enrich their lives, often bringing home opera records and copies of *Vanity Fair* and *Literary Digest* from the white households in which she worked. She saw to it that her sons had a phonograph, chemistry and electrical sets, and a toy typewriter, and she always encouraged them to read. Ralph and his brother were raised in an atmosphere of endless possibility, where even poor, young black boys could dream of achieving something great in their lives. Ralph's mother instilled in him a sense of the value of excellence and often said that she didn't care what he did with his life as long as he tried to be one of the best at whatever he chose.

As a child, Ralph took on a variety of small jobs — selling newspapers, collecting bottles for bootleggers, and shining shoes. Since his mother was out working most of the time, Ralph and his brother were often looked after by the Randolphs, a neighboring family. Mr. Randolph became a kind of adopted grandfather to Ralph after his own father died. When he wasn't selling newspapers or shining shoes, Ralph helped out in the Randolph drugstore, located in the heart of Oklahoma City's African-American neighborhood. This part of town was a gathering-place for black musicians. Ralph's lifelong love of jazz and the blues, which had a profound influence on his writing style, was partly the result of this early exposure to music.

EARLY MEMORIES

At the time his father died, Ralph hadn't yet made the connection between the name that he had been given and his father's love of reading. All he knew was that grown-ups often teased him by calling him Ralph Waldo Emerson.

When he protested that he was Ralph Waldo *Ellison* and that Emerson was the name of the little boy next door, they would laugh at him.

As Ralph grew older, he started using only the first initial of his middle name, and he avoided reading Emerson's works for many years. It wasn't until he was an adult that he came to terms with the fact that he had been named after one of America's greatest writers.

EDUCATION

Ellison attended a public elementary school in Oklahoma City. Although he got As and Bs in most of his subjects, music was Ellison's primary interest throughout his school years. He was playing the trumpet at age 8 and later took private lessons from the conductor of the Oklahoma City Orchestra—lessons he paid for by mowing the conductor's lawn. Ellison then attended Douglass High School, the city's first high school for blacks. "He was bright and he was studious," one of his former classmates recalls, "but he had a sharp tongue. . . . He made the rest of us uncomfortable, probably because he knew we weren't as bright as he was, and because he didn't let us forget it." Although he played first trumpet in the school orchestra, led the school marching band, and always had a part in school plays and programs, Ellison remembers himself as a loner. "I guess I lived far too much in books, or took books far too seriously, to allow some of my schoolmates to feel comfortable," he once admitted. He graduated from Douglass High School in 1933.

When he graduated from high school Ellison was awarded a music scholarship to Tuskegee Institute, the famous "Negro college" founded by ex-slave and educator Booker T. Washington. He didn't have enough money to pay his fare there, so he ended up hopping freight trains all the way to Alabama. At Tuskegee, where he studied composition and music theory under composer William L. Dawson, Ellison decided that he would write a symphony by the time that he was 26. But he ran out of money before his junior year and had to drop out of college. In 1936 he went to New York City to find a job that would pay him enough to return to Tuskegee and complete his music degree.

FIRST JOBS

Ellison held a number of jobs while living in New York City during the late 1930s. He worked in a factory and as a dental assistant, jazz trumpeter, and professional photographer. He tinkered with audio-electronics and often fixed radios and record players. One of his more interesting jobs was as a receptionist and file clerk for Dr. Harry Stack Sullivan, a well-known American psychiatrist. Sometimes he had no work at all and had to sleep in a public park.

In 1937 he went to Dayton, Ohio, to bury his mother. Ida Ellison, who was living there at the time, had died after falling off a porch and having her broken hip misdiagnosed as arthritis. He stayed in Dayton for a while with his younger brother, hunting quail for a living and eating what was left to stay alive. At night, they often slept in a car parked in an open garage, even though the temperature often dropped below zero.

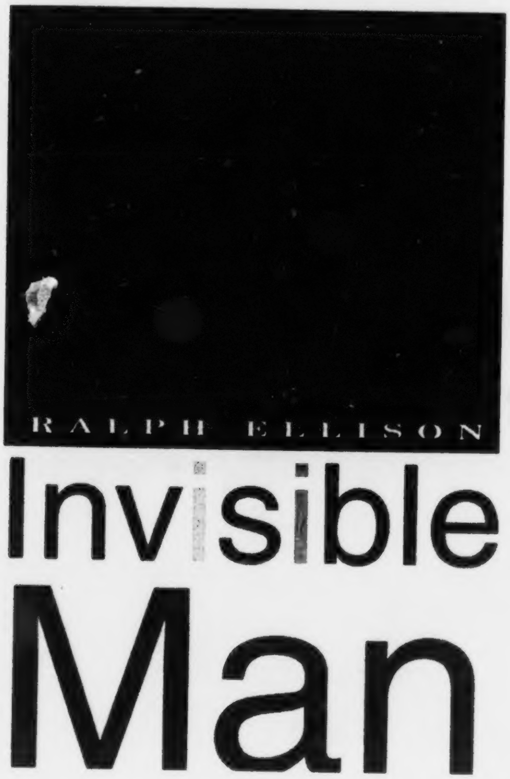
When Ellison returned to New York from Dayton, it became obvious that he would never earn enough money to go back to Tuskegee Institute. But he liked the excitement of living in a big city and decided to stay there.

BECOMING A WRITER

Ellison's shift from musician to writer began in 1935, when he first read T. S. Eliot's poem, "The Waste Land." Ellison recognized the similarities between the jazz that he'd grown up with and Eliot's writing style, in the ways that Eliot explored the possibilities of language. He found himself wondering why there were no black poets writing similar poems. He was also fascinated by all the references Eliot made to mythology, history, literature, and folklore in footnotes to "The Waste Land." These led him to read extensively in those original literary sources that had inspired Eliot. It was the start of his literary education.

When Ellison first arrived in New York in the summer of 1936, he ran into Langston Hughes, the famous African-American poet, on the steps of the Harlem YMCA. Hughes introduced him to novelist Richard Wright, who in turn asked Ellison if he would review a book for *New Challenge,* the magazine he was editing. Wright, who was already widely published and would soon become famous as the author of *Native Son,* became Ellison's first literary mentor. He eventually asked Ellison to write a short story for his magazine, but the story was never published and the magazine eventually folded.

In 1938 Ellison got a job as a researcher with the Federal Writers' Project, a government program that provided work for the unemployed during the Depression. His job was to collect folk tales—some of which later made their way into his fiction—for a study of Negroes in New York. He left the Writers' Project in 1942 to help edit *The Negro Quarterly.* By this time he was publishing articles, short stories, and criticism in well-established literary magazines and in the *New York Times Book Review.* He drew on his Oklahoma City background in many of these early stories, exploring the folklore, language, and society of the Southwest through the eyes of young black men. Just as the magazine was about to dissolve in 1943, he joined the Merchant Marine as a civilian. He wanted to contribute to the United States' effort in World War II but didn't want to be part of a "Jim Crow" army—in other words, a segregated army that kept blacks separate and treated them differently.



While he was still serving in the Merchant Marine, Ellison was awarded a Rosenwald fellowship to write a novel. In 1945 he became ill from drinking the ship's contaminated water supply. He left the Merchant Marine and went to a friend's farm in Vermont to recuperate and work on his book.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

Invisible Man

Ellison had already outlined a novel by the time he left the Merchant Marine. It was about an African-American pilot who is shot down, captured by the Nazis, and placed in a detention camp. But he'd never been able to complete it to his satisfaction, and only one section was ever published. Then one day, as he was working at his friend's house in Vermont, he wrote the line, "I am an invisible man." It was the start of a new novel for Ellison and the opening of a new chapter in American literary history.

It took Ellison five years to complete *Invisible Man,* the story of an idealistic black boy from the South who is expelled from his college and goes to New York City to find a job. The book chronicles the young man's efforts to find his own identity in a society that can't see beyond the color of his skin. He ends up being hurt in an accident and placed in a hospital, where he is strapped into a machine that leaves him unable to remember his own name. The latter part of the book describes his involvement in the Communist Party, a riot in Harlem, and other experiences—often brutal and nightmarish—that the young man goes through in his journey toward self-understanding.

Many of the novel's characters are types rather than individuals; even the book's hero is never given a name. And many of its events are symbolic, such as the time he spends working for a company that manufactures the white paint used on public monuments. His job is to add a drop of black to the white, a symbol of the positive effects of racial integration. The end of the novel, which describes the hero's retreat into a Harlem basement, where he contemplates his existence while surrounded by hundreds of light bulbs, is typical of its surrealistic and highly symbolic style.

Invisible Man was on the bestseller list for 13 weeks after it appeared. In 1953 it won the National Book Award, making Ralph Ellison the first African-American to achieve this honor. It was eventually translated into 15 languages and became required reading in many American college classrooms. It also changed Ellison's life forever, as invitations for lecture tours and teaching assignments began to pour in. In 1965, *Invisible Man* was voted the most distinguished novel published in the past 20 years in a poll of 200 writers, editors, and critics conducted by the New York *Herald Tribune's Book Week* magazine.

What had Ellison done that was so extraordinary? For one thing, he wrote about the richness and complexity of the African-American experience, rather than relying on stereotypes. He also wrote about it in a language that combined literary illusions and styles of the Western literary tradition with sounds and images inspired by African-American folk tales, spirituals, nursery rhymes, jazz, and the blues. He took the traditional form of the novel and made it flexible and expansive enough to accommodate the many different cultures and characters that made American society so unique. Above all, he set a new standard for young African-American writers.

After the publication of *Invisible Man*, Ellison was finally free of worries about money. He gave lecture tours in Germany, Austria, and Italy, and he accepted teaching appointments at such prestigious American colleges and universities as Yale, Columbia, Antioch, Princeton, Bennington, Bard, Rutgers, Chicago, and NYU.

Writing as a 'Negro American'

Despite his success, Ellison steadfastly refused to become a spokesperson for his race. "I think I can best serve my people and my nation by trying to write as well as I can," he once said. As the black nationalist movement gained momentum in the 1960s, Ellison was disturbed by the emphasis it placed on African-ness, separating Negroes from mainstream American culture. Ellison called himself an "American integrationist," and he preferred to be thought of as a novelist who happened to be black rather than a black novelist. He rejected the "Afro-American" label—the new term used by many American blacks in the 1960s—preferring to call himself "Negro American," which he felt better described the mixture of African, European, and Native American bloodlines from which he and other blacks had descended. When he was offered a trip to Africa in 1955, he turned it down, saying that he felt no special emotional attachment to the place.

But the 1960s were a time of fierce racial pride for African-Americans. Many younger black nationalists thought that Ralph Ellison had "sold out" to the white establishment. He was an outspoken supporter of not only racial integration but of the increasingly unpopular Vietnam War. He was a member of one of New York's most respectable clubs and served on a number of powerful cultural commissions, including the National Council on the Arts, the Carnegie Commission on Educational Television, and the Institute for Jazz Studies. To many blacks, Ellison was simply too much like a successful white man.

For a while, Ellison remained close to Richard Wright, his earliest mentor and a leading African-American writer of the time. But the state of race relations in America had prompted Wright and a few other prominent black authors and intellectuals to live in Europe, and Ellison was so passionately devoted to his own country that he couldn't imagine leaving it. Eventually he chose to separate himself from Wright by remaining on his home ground and proving by his own example that growing up poor, fatherless, and black was no bar to success in American society.

Ellison the Essayist

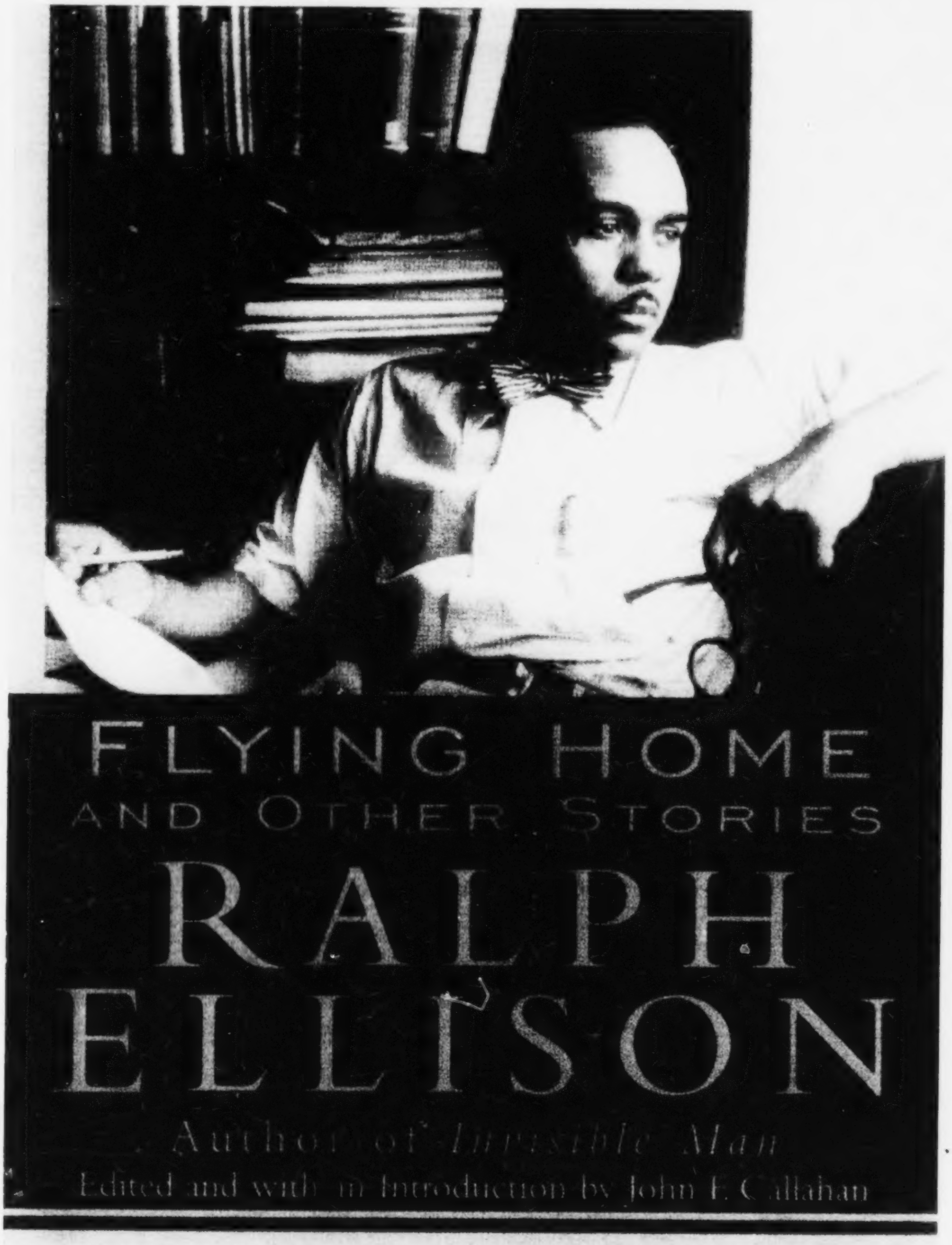
Ellison published numerous articles, essays, and short stories in magazines in the years following the publication of *Invisible Man,* but it was more than a decade before his second book came out. *Shadow and Act,* published in 1964, was a collection of essays and interviews written over a 22-year period. It contained Ellison's own theories about writing as well as his critical evaluations of other writers.

Shadow and Act established Ellison as a cultural critic as well as a novelist. He wrote on African-American folklore and music and on the complex relationship between the African-American subculture and the culture of America as a whole. Throughout, he portrayed the black experience as a particularly positive and rewarding one. While many other black writers focused on the pain and suffering that blacks endured, Ellison's world was full of jazz, singing, and folk stories. Again, he was attacked for not using his talents to advance the cause of his race. But *Shadow and Act* made it clear that he was one of America's most insightful observers.

A second collection of essays, *Going to the Territory,* appeared in 1986. It treated many of the same subjects as *Shadow and Act*—including literature, art, music, and the relationship between black and white cultures. Much of the book's content had been previously published in newspapers and magazines, however, and some of its essays and articles dated back to the 1960s. Although more than 20 years had elapsed, Ellison's reputation still rested primarily on his ground-breaking first novel.

The Second Novel

Ellison had begun to jot down ideas for a second novel before *Invisible Man* was even published. It was to be the story of a black musician-turned-evan-



FLYING HOME
AND OTHER STORIES
RALPH
ELLISON
Author of *Invisible Man*
Edited and with an Introduction by John F. Callahan

gelist known as the Reverend Hickman whose adopted son, Bliss Hickman, has skin light enough to "pass for white." A white woman appears, claims that Bliss is her own child, and takes him north. He grows up to be a racist U.S. Senator from Massachusetts and is eventually assassinated by a black man.

Several sections of the novel-in-progress were published in magazines and read on college campuses, but the long-awaited completed book never appeared. There were a number of theories going around about why Ellison couldn't finish writing it. One was that over the years its racial themes had simply become outdated. Ellison himself admitted that he stopped working on it during the 1960s, after the assassinations of Martin Luther King, Jr., John F. Kennedy, and Robert Kennedy. Because he was already committed to the idea of using the assassination of a major political figure are the novel's central incident, it made him uneasy when life began to imitate the events portrayed in his fiction.

Certainly one of the major reasons for the slowdown in Ellison's writing was the tragic fire that occurred at his summer house in Plainfield, Massachusetts, in 1967. Ellison and his wife had gone out to do some shopping, and when they returned their house was on fire. The local volunteer fire department was off fighting another fire at the time, and the entire house burned down, consuming 350 pages representing a year's worth of revisions on the new novel. Ellison sank into a deep depression about the loss, and it was four or five years before he could work on the novel again.

Although he eventually produced more than 2,000 manuscript pages, the long-awaited second novel remained unfinished at the time of Ellison's death from pancreatic cancer on April 16, 1994. Today, Ellison's reputation still rests primarily on his ground-breaking first novel, *Invisible Man*, for its insightful analysis of the effects of alienation and for its in-depth depiction of the African-American experience in a hostile society.

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

Ralph Ellison was married twice. Not much is known about his first wife, except that the marriage failed, partly because his wife's parents didn't think writing was a reliable vocation for a married man. Ellison married Fanny McConnell in July 1946. Fanny had been educated at Fisk University in Nashville and at the University of Iowa, where she studied drama and speech. She loved books and expressed an interest in meeting Ellison after a mutual friend told her about his extensive library. After their marriage, the Ellisons lived for many years in an apartment on Riverside Drive in the Washington Heights section of Manhattan, close to Harlem. They had no children. When Ellison died, he was buried on the same street where he and Fanny had spent most of their lives.

MAJOR INFLUENCES

T. S. Eliot's "The Waste Land" was the greatest influence on Ellison's life as a writer. When he discovered Eliot, he realized that the humor, energy, and creativity that characterized life for many black Americans were missing from the poetry and fiction that was being written about them.

Ellison was also greatly influenced by the novels and short stories of Ernest Hemingway. Like African-Americans in American society, many of Hemingway's characters were "outsiders" with whom Ellison could sympathize. He also admired Hemingway's gift for descriptive detail. When Ellison was trying to make a living by hunting quail with his brother, he read Hemingway at night. "I had been hunting since I was 11, but no one had broken down the process of wing-shooting for me," Ellison once said. "It was from reading Hemingway that I learned to lead a bird."

ADVICE TO YOUNG WRITERS

Ellison liked to remind young writers that they had to discipline themselves and do without certain material comforts if they wanted to pursue a literary life. He also advised them to read all the "great books" they could find and to learn from the achievements of other writers. He constantly emphasized the importance of getting a broad education. "You must know your society, and know it beyond your own neighborhood or region. You must know its manners and its ideals and its conduct," he said. "And you should know something of what's happening in the sciences, in religion, in government, and in the other arts."

The problem of becoming an artist, Ellison often told young people, is closely related to that of becoming a mature human being. "You need a discipline far more demanding than loyalty to your racial group," he cautioned them, urging them to write about universal experiences rather than confining themselves to issues pertaining only to blacks.

HOBBIES AND OTHER INTERESTS

Throughout his life, Ellison was fascinated by electronics. He learned to build "crystal" radio sets when he was a boy by reading *Popular Mechanics* and *American Boy* magazines. In the late 1940s, he supported himself by building and selling hi-fi equipment. His apartment in New York had an elaborate stereo system that he built himself and loved to show off.

In his spare time, Ellison was also a gourmet cook, a skilled photographer, a musician, an art collector, and a furniture designer.

WRITINGS

Books

Invisible Man, 1952
Shadow and Act, 1964
Going to the Territory, 1986

Short Stories

"Slick Gonna Learn," 1939
"Afternoon," 1940
"The Birthmark," 1940
"Mister Toussan," 1941
"That I Had the Wings," 1943
"Flying Home," 1944
"In a Strange Country," 1944
"King of the Bingo Game," 1944
"Did You Ever Dream Lucky?" 1954
"A Coupla Scalped Indians," 1956
"And Hickman Arrives," 1960
"The Roof, the Steeple, and the People," 1960
"It Always Breaks Out," 1963
"Out of the Hospital and Under the Bar," 1963
"Juneteenth," 1965
"Night-Talk," 1969
"A Song of Innocence," 1970
"Cadillac Flambé," 1973
"Backwacking, A Plea to the Senator," 1977

HONORS AND AWARDS

Rosenwald Fellowship: 1945-47
National Book Award: 1953, for *Invisible Man*
Russwurm Award (National Newspaper Publishers Association): 1953, for *Invisible Man*
Rockefeller Foundation Award: 1954
Prix de Rome Fellowship (American Academy of Arts and Letters): 1955, 1956
National Newspaper Publishers Award: 1963
National Institute of Arts and Letters: appointed 1964
Presidential Medal of Freedom (U.S. Executive Office of the President): 1969
Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et Lettres: 1970
National Medal of Arts (National Endowment for the Arts): 1985
Coordinating Council of Literary Magazines-General Electric Foundation Award: 1988
Harold Washington Literary Award (Chicago Public Library): 1992

FURTHER READING

Books

African American Biography, Vol. 2
Authors and Artists, Vol. 19

Berger, Laura S., ed. *Twentieth-Century Young Adult Writers,* 1994
Contemporary Authors New Revision Series, Vol. 24
Davis, Arthur P. *The Dark Tower: Afro-American Writers 1900-1960,* 1981
Dictionary of Literary Biography, Vol. 76
Encyclopedia Britannica, 1996
Smith, Valerie, ed. *African American Writers,* 1991
Who's Who in America, 1994-95
World Book Encyclopedia, 1997

Periodicals

Atlantic Monthly, Dec. 1970, p.45
Current Biography Yearbook 1968, 1993, 1994 (obituary)
Harper's Magazine, Mar. 1967, p.76
The Nation, Sep. 20, 1965, p.129
New Republic, May 9, 1994, p.23
New York Times, Apr. 17, 1994, p.38; Apr. 18, 1996, p.C13
New York Times Biographical Service, Apr. 1994, p.578
New York Times Magazine, Nov. 20, 1966, p.54; Jan. 1, 1995, p.23
New Yorker, Nov. 22, 1976 p.55; Mar. 14, 1994, p.34; Apr. 29 & May 6, 1996, p.110
Saturday Review, Mar. 14, 1953, p.20
Time, Apr. 25, 1994, p.90

Louise Fitzhugh 1928-1974

American Writer and Illustrator of Children's Books
Author of *Harriet the Spy*

BIRTH

Louise Perkins Fitzhugh was born in Memphis, Tennessee, on October 5, 1928. She was the only child of Millsaps Fitzhugh, an attorney, and Louise (Perkins) Fitzhugh. After their divorce, her father remarried in 1933, and Louise lived with her father and stepmother, Sally (Taylor) Fitzhugh.

YOUTH

Louise had a very unhappy childhood. Her father, Millsaps

Fitzhugh, came from a wealthy and socially prominent Memphis family. He decided to marry Louise Perkins, a young woman who wanted to be a dancer. The marriage outraged Millsaps's mother. She felt that the Perkins family, which had no money, was beneath them. Within a few months after Louise was born, her grandmother (Millsaps's mother) had persuaded him to divorce his wife, Louise's mother. The resulting battle over the custody of their daughter was widely publicized in all the Memphis papers, creating a sensation. It was a particularly ugly custody battle — her father said that her mother was unfit. Louise ended up living with her father in her grandmother's gloomy Southern mansion, which fueled Louise's later desire to escape from the South. Louise was raised believing that her mother had died.

After the divorce, Louise's mother suffered a nervous breakdown. When she recovered, she went off to Hollywood to start a career as a tap dancer. Louise was about five years old when her mother returned to Memphis and started trying to see her. Although Louise remembered seeing a woman being turned away from her front door one day, she didn't realize until later that it was her mother. Eventually, years later, Fitzhugh's mother was allowed to have occasional visits with her. But by that time, it was hard for Louise to accept the idea that she really had a mother.

EDUCATION

Fitzhugh attended the elite Miss Hutchinson's School in Memphis. Her classmates remember her as being very popular. She read widely, doodled constantly, played tennis, studied the flute, and went to the movies often. She also started writing by the age of 11. While Fitzhugh was a student at Miss Hutchinson's School, some of her teenage friends decided it would be fun to go down to "coon town" and throw rocks at young black girls and boys. Louise was so appalled by this behavior that she became determined to leave the South as soon as she could.

After graduating from Miss Hutchinson's in 1946, Fitzhugh went to Southwestern College in Memphis for a short while, then transferred to Florida Southern College. In 1948 she made her first break with the South and transferred to Bard College in New York. She selected it because her uncle, the novelist Peter Taylor, had recommended its writing program. At Bard, she studied writing, contemporary literature, and child psychology.

In 1949 Fitzhugh inherited enough money from her grandmother to live on her own in New York City and study art, which now interested her more than literature. She left Bard just six months before completing her degree. She moved to Greenwich Village and enrolled at the Art Students League, and later studied at Cooper Union. In 1954 she spent six months painting in Europe, and in 1957 she went to Bologna, Italy, to study painting for a year.

BECOMING A WRITER

Fitzhugh's primary interest after she dropped out of college was art, and she tried to develop a career as a painter. But she also continued to experiment with writing. In 1960, she and her friend Sandra Scoppettone came up with the idea of creating a picture book for grown-ups based on their own bohemian lifestyle. They were inspired by Kay Thompson's *Eloise,* a book about a young girl living in the swanky Plaza Hotel in New York. Originally aimed at adults, it became a hit with younger readers as well. The two collaborated on *Suzuki Beane* (1961), written by Scoppettone and illustrated by Fitzhugh. The story was about a beatnik child who becomes friends with a wealthy young boy from the Upper East Side of New York City. It was accepted for publication almost immediately and was very popular, first among adults and later among children. Fitzhugh's exaggerated caricatures of early 1960s "types"—including beatniks, poets, and dancing teachers—revealed her talent for exposing human foolishness. Despite the work's early popularity, it is considered dated today.

The initial success of *Suzuki Beane* prompted Fitzhugh to write a number of works on her own, including a novel called *Crazybaby* and an autobiographical play. But none of them was ever published, perhaps because Fitzhugh did not respond well to criticism from editors and often refused to make any revisions.

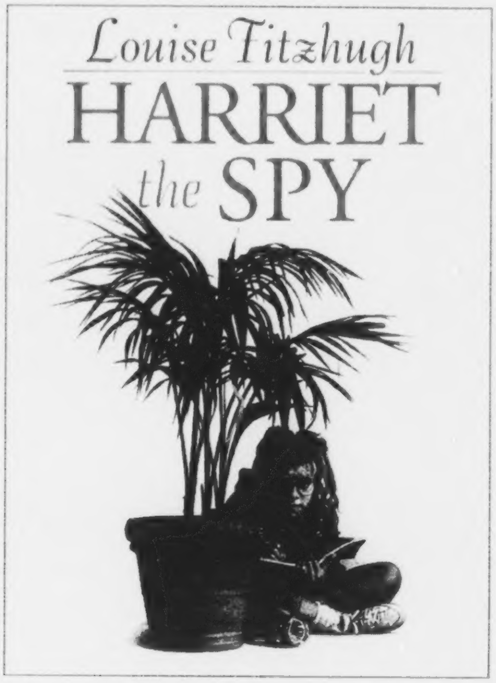
It was also in the early 1960s that Fitzhugh began writing *Amelia,* a novel about two teenage girls who fall in love. She showed it to an agent, who refused to handle it because the lesbian subject matter was too controversial. The manuscript later disappeared.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

Harriet the Spy

At the age of 35, Fitzhugh began writing the book for which she is remembered today, *Harriet the Spy* (1964). It's about Harriet M. Welsch, a relentlessly curious 11-year-old girl living in New York City. Determined to be a writer, she goes around spying on other people and recording her observations in a black notebook. She eavesdrops from dumbwaiters, peeks through skylights, and watches as her friends, neighbors, and total strangers go about their lives, doing the same peculiar things over and over again because they are incapable of change. Harriet's own life, however, is just as regimented: she writes compulsively in her notebook, eats only tomato sandwiches for lunch, and insists upon having cake and milk when she gets home from school.

The adults in Harriet's life are oblivious to her. Both her father, a television executive, and her mother, who is preoccupied with her social activities, are



too busy to pay much attention to their daughter. Only Ole Golly, her nanny, understands anything about her. But when Ole Golly goes off and gets married, Harriet's life begins to unravel. Her notebook is discovered, and her friends are furious over the unkind things she's written about them. Harriet sees a psychiatrist and takes to heart a letter from Ole Golly, reminding her that the purpose of writing is "to put love in the world, not to use against your friends." Only then is she able to apologize—even though it means hiding her true feelings and learning when it's best to tell a little white lie. Harriet eventually gets a job at the school newspaper and learns the difference between writing about other people and spying on them.

A pioneering novel, *Harriet the Spy* met with mixed success following its publication in 1964. It broke down all kinds of barriers in children's literature by consistently portraying its characters' faults. The parents drink martinis, lose their tempers, and take their troubled daughter to a psychiatrist. And Harriet is self-absorbed and often rude, but also vulnerable and touching. This approach brought a mixed response from critics. Some objected to what they considered the novel's cynical tone. They criticized Harriet's character as merely selfish and ill-mannered, and they questioned the story's suitability for children. It became controversial among some adults, who complained that their children were starting to imitate Harriet's behavior. This became the basis of censorship of the novel, as some school librarians removed the book from their shelves because of parents' concerns.

Yet other critics loved the book, praising Harriet's characterization as refreshingly honest. As Ellen Rudin wrote in *Library Journal*, "Harriet M. Welsch is not a lovable child, but she is one of the meatiest heroines in modern juvenile fiction. . . . This novel is a tour de force. It is a children's book, surely, told at a level comprehensible to children, yet it is intensely written, involuted, rich in dramatic vignettes and in warm breathing characters. Harriet suffers growth and change in the best tradition of literature's most anguished heroines. *Harriet the Spy* bursts with life. It is up to date, here and now, this minute, real." Young readers also loved the book immediately. In the late 1960s, girls all over the country started forming "Harriet the Spy" clubs, and the book has been a favorite of young readers ever since. When the story was made into a movie in 1996 starring Michelle Trachtenberg as Harriet and talk-show host Rosie O'Donnell as Ole Golly, it brought even more young readers to the novel.

The Long Secret

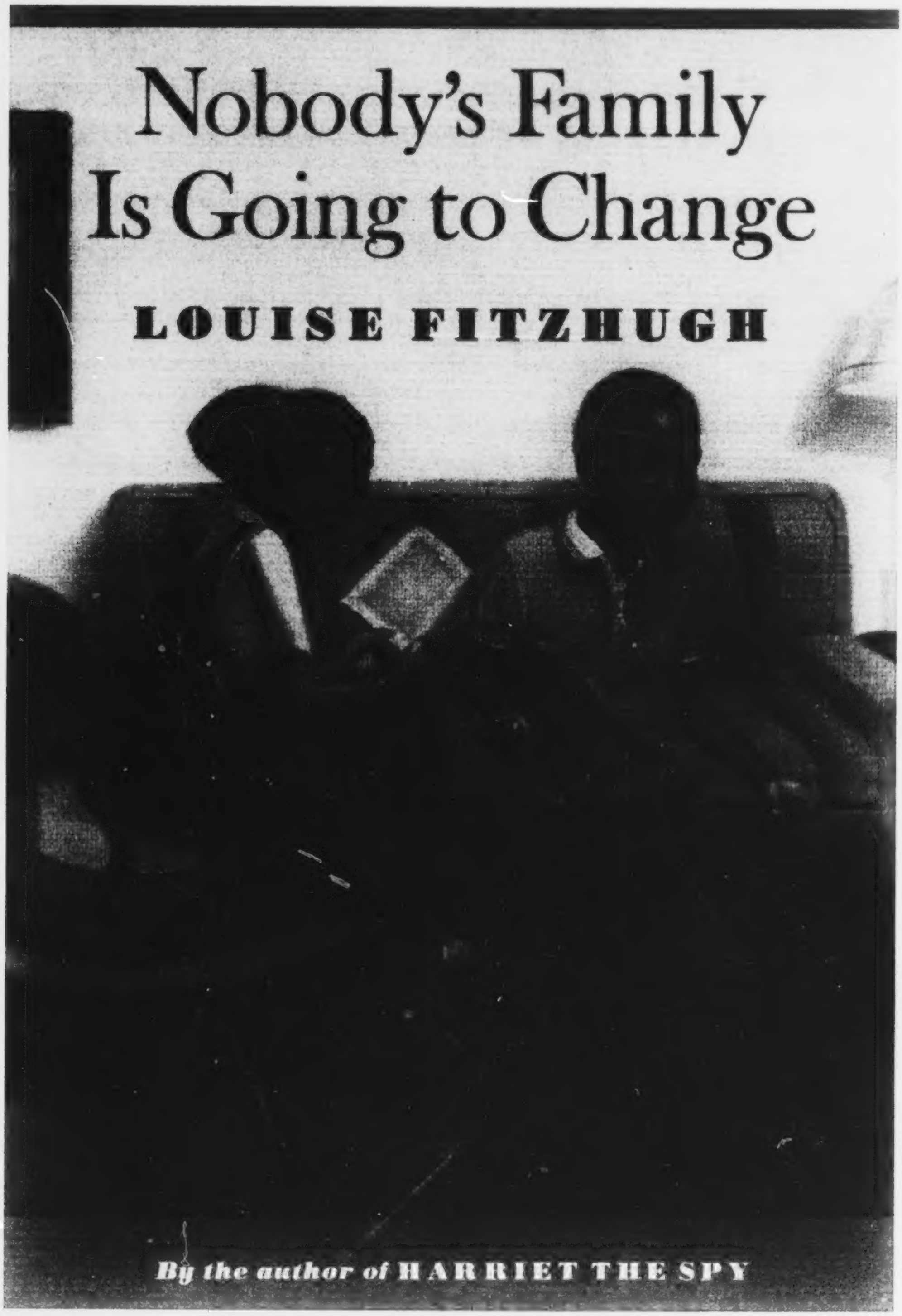
Harriet the Spy was so successful that Fitzhugh wrote a sequel, *The Long Secret* (1965), which continues the story of Harriet. It focuses primarily, though, on Beth Ellen Hansen, who was one of Harriet's classmates in *Harriet the Spy*. Beth Ellen is a timid girl who is not really what she appears to be. Both girls are spending their summer in Water Mill, New York, where someone has been distributing anonymous and often shocking notes to the townspeople. Harriet is determined to track down the mysterious note-writer. By offering a realistic description of young girls' reactions to puberty, *The Long Secret* became the first book of junior fiction to broach the subject of menstruation. The noted children's editor Ursula Nordstrom explained her reaction when she first read the manuscript: "When I came to the page where the onset of Beth Ellen's first menstrual period occurred, and it was written so beautifully, to such perfection, I scrawled in the margin, 'Thank you, Louise Fitzhugh.' It was the first mention in junior books of this tremendous event in a girl's life." Although *The Long Secret* received favorable reviews when it was first published, today it is much less popular than *Harriet the Spy*.

In *Harriet the Spy* and *The Long Secret*, Fitzhugh created intelligent, vital, memorable, and realistic middle-class urban children from financially successful families. Yet these families are also fragmented: the children are lonely and emotionally isolated, with no one to offer guidance and support. Her work struck a chord both with young readers and many of their parents, helping them to see that an affluent upbringing did not guarantee a happy, well-adjusted child. Together, *Harriet the Spy* and *The Long Secret* introduced a new kind of realism into children's literature.

After *Harriet*

The year 1965 marked a turning point for Louise Fitzhugh: her father died and she came into an even larger inheritance, which she immediately used to purchase a summer house on Long Island. The inheritance enabled her to break off her last ties to the South.

Fitzhugh's next book was *Bang, Bang, You're Dead* (1969), which she wrote in collaboration with Sandra Scoppettone. The novel is another example of her desire to deal with realistic, even controversial issues. Appearing in the midst of the Vietnam War era, it conveyed a strong message about the senselessness


Nobody's Family Is Going to Change
LOUISE FITZHUGH
By the author of HARRIET THE SPY

of war and violence. *Bang, Bang, You're Dead* describes an increasingly violent battle between two groups of children. It ends with the realization that they have more to lose than to gain by fighting each other. But many adults were disturbed by its ugly language (which included such expressions as "puke-face") and Fitzhugh's graphic illustrations of violence.

Nobody's Family is Going to Change was published just a week after Louise Fitzhugh's sudden death at the age of 46 from an aneurysm on November 19, 1974. Again she attacks conventional values, this time by focusing on the evils of discrimination. The main character, Emma Sheridan, is a young black girl from a middle-class family who wants to grow up to be a lawyer like her father. Her father thinks that a woman becoming a lawyer is unfeminine, and he does everything he can to discourage her. Mr. Sheridan would much prefer that his son, Willie, follow in his footsteps. But Willie wants to become a dancer, a very unmasculine pursuit in his father's eyes. Although the characters are deliberate stereotypes, the book offers no easy answers. Near the end, when her father says "I think any woman who tries to be a lawyer is a damned fool," Emma responds with, "That . . . is your problem, not mine." Emma learns that while her parents may never change, she can change her own attitude toward them. In the early 1980s, *Nobody's Family is Going to Change* became the basis for a successful Broadway musical called "The Tap Dance Kid."

Several other books were published posthumously. At the time she died, Fitzhugh was working on the text and illustrations of *I Am Five,* part of an uncompleted series of picture books that depicts the typical activities of very young children. The book was published in 1978, four years after her death. Two other titles in the series were published in 1982: *I Am Three* and *I Am Four*. In 1979, Fitzhugh's publishers brought out *Sport,* based on the character who was Harriet's best friend in *Harriet the Spy*. Sport's parents are divorced. He lives with his father, who is about to get married to a woman that Sport adores. Just then, he inherits a huge amount of money from his grandfather. That gets the attention of his heartless and arrogant socialite mother, who had earlier abandoned him and left for Europe. She tries to get her hands on the money by kidnaping him and holding him hostage in the Plaza Hotel.

FITZHUGH'S LEGACY

Although she published relatively few books in her short life, Fitzhugh left her mark on children's literature. *Harriet the Spy* is widely acknowledged to be an original and ground-breaking book that paved the way for modern "problem novels" and realistic fiction for children. "Louise Fitzhugh has proven that contemporary, realistic fiction of psychological and philosophical depth is a viable possibility for children," critic Virginia Wolf explained. "*Harriet the Spy* is a milestone and a masterpiece of children's literature — perhaps *the* masterpiece of the mid-20th century."

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

When she was young, Fitzhugh was married very briefly to Ed Thompson, whom she had dated near the end of high school. The two ran off one night and were married in Mississippi, but Louise's father and stepmother quickly had the marriage annulled.

Fitzhugh spent most of her life trying to lose her Southern accent and forget that she had been born and brought up in the South. She lived at various times in Washington, D.C., New York City, and on the North Shore of Long Island. When she died at the age of 46, she left instructions that she was to be buried north of the Mason-Dixon line (the border between Pennsylvania and Maryland, popularly regarded as the line dividing the North from the South). Her friends arranged for her to be buried in Bridgewater, Connecticut, near the house she had purchased there in 1969.

HOBBIES AND OTHER INTERESTS

Fitzhugh played the flute throughout her life and loved music. She was also known to be a superb dancer and a talented painter.

WRITINGS

For Children (Self-Illustrated)

Harriet the Spy, 1964
The Long Secret, 1965
Bang, Bang, You're Dead, 1969 (with Sandra Scoppettone)
Nobody's Family Is Going to Change, 1974
I Am Five, 1978
Sport, 1979

For Children (Illustrated by Others)

I Am Three, 1982
I Am Four, 1982

Illustrator

Suzuki Beane, 1961 (with text by Sandra Scoppettone)

HONORS AND AWARDS

Outstanding Children's Books of the Year (*New York Times*): 1964, for *Harriet the Spy*
Notable Book (American Library Association): 1967, for *Harriet the Spy*

Best Illustrated Children's Books of the Year (*New York Times*): 1969, for *Bang, Bang, You're Dead*

Children's Book Bulletin Award: 1976, for *Nobody's Family is Going to Change*

FURTHER READING

Books

Berger, Laura Standley, ed. *Twentieth-Century Children's Writers,* 1995
Contemporary Authors New Revision Series, Vol. 34
De Montreville, Doris, ed. *Third Book of Junior Authors,* 1972
Dictionary of Literary Biography, Vol. 52
Silvey, Anita, ed. *Children's Books and Their Creators,* 1995
Something about the Author, Vol. 45
Wolf, Virginia. *Louise Fitzhugh,* 1992 (juvenile)

Periodicals

Entertainment Weekly, July 19, 1996, p.58
Horn Book, Feb. 1965, p.74; Aug. 1980, p.442
Library Journal, Nov. 15, 1964, p.89
Ms., July/Aug. 1996, p.80
New York Times Biographical Edition, Nov. 1974, p.1558
Publishers Weekly, Dec. 2, 1974, p.18
Village Voice Literary Supplement, Apr. 1995, p.12

Jean Craighead George 1919-

American Writer and Illustrator of Novels and Books on Natural History for Young Adults
Author of *My Side of the Mountain* and *Julie of the Wolves*

BIRTH

Jean Craighead George was born in Washington, D.C., on July 2, 1919. Her father, Frank Cooper Craighead, was a botanist and an entomologist (a scientist who studies insects) who worked for the U.S. Forest Service. Her mother, Carolyn (Johnson) Craighead, was also an entomologist—and a gifted storyteller. Along with her older twin brothers, Frank and John, Jean was introduced to the wonders of the natural world at a very early age.

66

YOUTH

The three Craighead children spent most of their weekends following their parents as they explored the plant and animal life along the banks of the Potomac River, outside Washington. They would camp on the river's sandy islands and spend hours observing the insects who lived there. They learned how to catch fish using hooks made from thorns and to cook milkweed pods and other wild plants by boiling them in a pot made out of a turtle shell.

The Craigheads' home in Washington, D.C., was a haven for injured and orphaned wildlife. Jean and her brothers did their homework with opossums curled up in their laps and lizards skittering over their open books. Their mother never complained about the barn owls that flew in and out of the windows or the praying mantises that hatched on the dining room table. The only pet she couldn't tolerate was Jean's turkey vulture, who sat on the top of the kitchen door and watched as she cooked meat on the stove.

During the summer, when their father was off supervising his field research stations, the children and their mother stayed in an old Victorian house in an area of southern Pennsylvania named after the Craighead family, who had farmed there since the mid-1700s. Jean fished, swam, played softball, caught frogs, and rode hay wagons with her brothers. Domestic tasks like sewing and canning held little interest for her, but she had plenty of opportunities to read books from her grandfather's library and to observe the skunks, snakes, and birds who lived in the surrounding woods.

EARLY MEMORIES

Jean has vivid memories of going on nature walks with her father, who would often present her and her brothers with what he called "brain teasers." One day, for example, he took them into a field and asked them why there were eight hawks circling overhead. When they couldn't guess the right answer, he walked them through the tall grass and showed them the hundreds of voles who were hiding there. Then he asked them why there were so many voles. Together they figured out that the farmer who owned the field had moved away, leaving it unmowed for several years. The voles had come to feed on the seeds produced by the dense, tall grasses, and the hawks had come to feed on the voles. These "brain teasers" taught Jean to pay close attention to the mysteries of nature.

EDUCATION

As a first-grader, Jean decided that she wanted to grow up to be an illustrator, writer, dancer, poet, and mother, with swimming and ice skating as her hobbies. She danced, wrote, painted, swam, and ice skated all through high school and during her years at Pennsylvania State University, where she majored in English and studied under the Pulitzer Prize-winning poet, Theodore Roethke. While she was there, she added politics and journalism to her career goals, with science as a hobby. Not surprisingly, she was voted "Most Versatile Senior Woman" by her college classmates when she graduated with a B.A. in 1941.

Jean received a modern dance scholarship to Louisiana State University after she left Pennsylvania State, but the U.S. entry into World War II in 1941 forced her to drop her plans for a career in dance and return to Washington D.C. to find work.

FIRST JOBS

Jean's first jobs gave her a chance to use her training in journalism. In 1942 she was hired as a reporter by the International News Service in Washington, D.C. She also worked as a reporter for the *Washington Post* from 1943 to 44. *Pageant* magazine in New York City hired her as an artist in 1945, and during this same period of time she worked for United Features in New York as both an artist and a reporter. All of these early jobs helped her to develop her writing skills and provided her with invaluable training as an illustrator.

BECOMING A WRITER

Jean knew from the time she was in grade school that she wanted to be a writer. She started by writing fantasy stories in her diary and notebooks, but she had trouble identifying with the wealthy queens and beautiful princesses who played a starring role in these stories. "Princesses did not have owls that took showers with the family. They did not raise mice to feed to their falcons or own pet skunks that demanded *chili con carne* by stamping on the floor," Jean comments.

After returning from one of her weekend nature trips with her parents along the Potomac, Jean would always sit down and write—first poetry and then, as she grew older, short stories. When she was a senior in high school, she went on a fishing trip with her father where everything she did was wrong—from pitching the tent in the middle of a footpath to releasing the fish her father had caught for their dinner. But she wrote the whole story down and discovered that the words came very easily.

After deciding that news reporting wasn't what she really wanted to do with her life, Jean returned to writing about nature. Her earliest published works were articles for magazines and short nonfiction books about animals.

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

Jean Craighead met John Lothar George when she was working for the *Washington Post* and he was serving in the Navy during World War II. They were married four months later, on January 28, 1944. After the war was over, John returned to the University of Michigan, where he was completing his Ph.D. in ornithology (the study of birds). He and Jean lived in a tent in the Michigan woods for three years, watching and observing birds and other woodland creatures as they built their nests and raised their young.

After the birth of their children, Carolyn (called Twig), John Craighead (called Craig) and Thomas Luke (called Luke), Jean and her husband decided it was time to introduce them to nature. They encouraged them to bring skunks, minks, and owls into the house and eventually helped them raise 173 wild pets, most of whom were returned to nature. Her experiences with these pets provided the background for Jean's first six books. These were works of fiction with animals as the central characters, which she co-authored with her husband. She wrote most of the text for these books and did the illustrations, while John contributed his observations of birds and animals.

Although their writing partnership was successful and provided a much-needed bond between them, the Georges' marriage was deteriorating. John lost his teaching job at Vassar College and, while his family stayed behind in southeastern New York, started a new job in Washington D.C., commuting home only on weekends. By this time, Jean had started writing and publishing under her own name. She finally accepted the fact that her marriage was ending, and she and her husband were divorced in 1964.

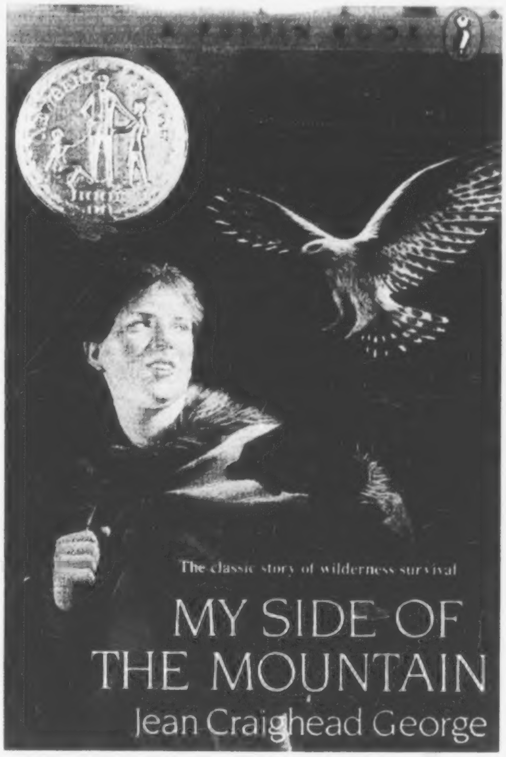
CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

Early Collaborations

Almost all of Jean George's books come from one of three sources: her childhood experiences with nature and animals, her research trips, and the wild creatures she has raised as pets. Each of the first six books that Jean George wrote with her husband deals with a specific type of animal. *Vulpes, the Red Fox* (1948) is the story of a wild fox who loves to be chased by the hounds but knows exactly how to outsmart them. Although it was inspired by watching her dog play with a fox that lived near her childhood home, Jean also relied on notes that her husband had taken while interviewing a dog trainer who hunted foxes. The baby owl who lived with the Georges at their research site in southeastern Michigan and later accompanied them to Vassar College became the inspiration for *Bubo, the Great Horned Owl* (1954).

Perhaps the most successful of these collaborations was *Dipper of Copper Creek* (1956). It weaves together facts about the life cycle of a bird known as the water ouzel with a story about a prospector and his grandson. The Georges researched and wrote the book while visiting the Rocky Mountain Biological Laboratory in Gothic, Colorado. It was awarded the Aurianne Prize for nature writing from the American Library Association.

The first book that George wrote without her husband's assistance was called *The Hole in the Tree* (1957). It traces the history of a hole in an old apple tree, from its origins as a tiny opening made by a bark beetle until it is large enough to house an entire family of raccoons.

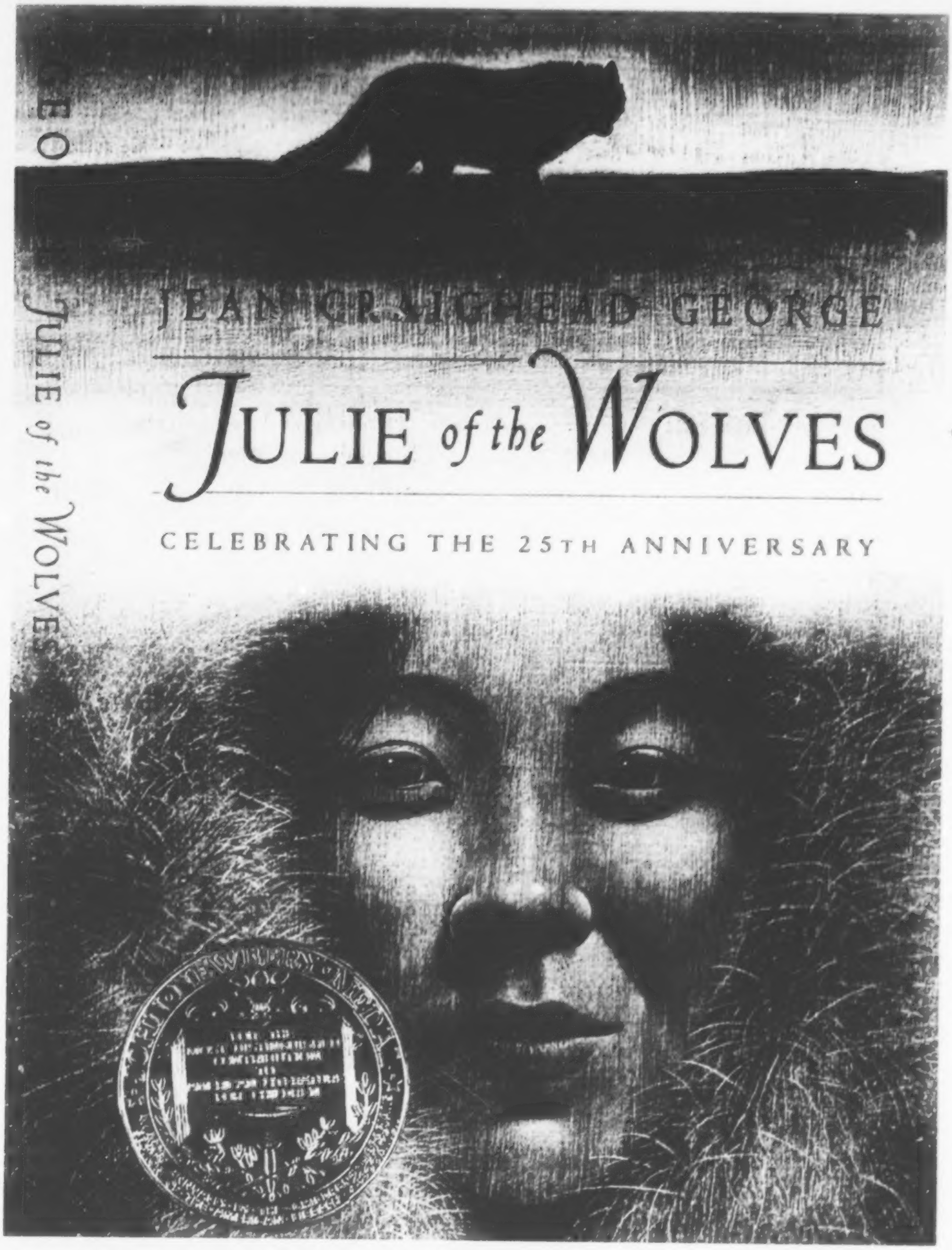


My Side of the Mountain

George's first really successful juvenile novel, *My Side of the Mountain,* wasn't published until 1959. It's about a New York City boy, Sam Gribley, who decides to leave his home and make his way in the wilderness of the Catskill Mountains. Written in the form of Sam's diary, it tells how he goes to the town library to gather information about finding and preparing food, building a shelter, and training a falcon to hunt. He starts on his journey with only a penknife, a ball of string, an ax, some flint and steel, and $40 in his pocket.

George says that most of the book is based on her girlhood camping experiences with her father and her twin brothers. "We made fish hooks from thorns, and rope from vine fibers. We built shelters and hunted with falcons. We cooked wild plants in turtle shells and boiled leaves in water. I did and ate everything in that book," George recalls. *My Side of the Mountain* was a runner-up for the Newbery Medal in 1960 and was released as a film nine years later. It was so popular among young readers that George wrote a sequel, *On the Far Side of the Mountain,* in 1990.

Up until the mid-1960s, Jean George had illustrated most of her own books. But then she decided to concentrate more on her writing. Although she continued to do the illustrations for some of her books, the majority of her published works after the mid-1960s were illustrated by other professional artists.


JEAN CRAIGHEAD GEORGE
JULIE of the WOLVES
CELEBRATING THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY
GEO
JULIE of the WOLVES

Julie of the Wolves

In 1970, when George was working as a staff writer for *Reader's Digest,* she and her younger son, Luke, went to Alaska to learn more about wolf behavior for an article she was researching. They visited the scientists who were studying captive wolf packs at the Arctic Research Laboratory in Barrow, then went to Mount McKinley National Park to observe wolves in the wild. Jean spent a week lying on her belly and watching a pack of wolves through a spotting scope. She learned about their language and social structure, and discovered that they were more shy than aggressive. Eventually she was able to get down on all fours and talk "wolf talk," persuading the female leader of the pack to come when she was called, wag her tail, and look George in the eye. The article Jean wrote for *Reader's Digest* was never published, but the experience had a far more profound effect on her than she anticipated.

The inspiration for *Julie of the Wolves* (1972) came not only from the time George spent observing the wolves in Alaska but from a young girl she'd seen, dressed in fur and walking all alone toward the vast tundra. The book she started writing when she got home was about a young Eskimo girl named Julie Kapugen who leaves an unwanted marriage and sets out to meet a pen pal in San Francisco. When she gets lost on the Alaskan tundra, she meets and communicates with a pack of wild wolves whose help is crucial to her survival.

Julie of the Wolves won the 1973 Newbery Medal and was a finalist for the National Book Award. Some schools and libraries banned the novel because of the "rape scene," in which Julie, who is forced to marry, must fight off her husband's advances. But George insisted that the scene was a necessary part of the story and that it provided Julie with the motivation to run away. The Children's Literature Association subsequently named *Julie of the Wolves* as one of the ten best American children's books written in the last 200 years. It has been so popular in the decades since its publication that George has written two sequels: *Julie* in 1994 and *Julie's Wolf Pack* in 1997.

Nonfiction Books

George's knowledge of wolves also inspired *The Moon of the Grey Wolves* (1969), one of the books in her "Thirteen Moons" series. Published between 1967 and 1969, the series reflects George's love and understanding of wild animals and their habitats. Each book focuses on a particular phase in an animal's life cycle. *The Moon of the Bears* (1967), for example, is about a bear living in the Smoky Mountains of Tennessee. Another book in the series focuses on the life of a mole in Twin Butte Creek in Kansas, and *The Moon of the Salamanders* (1967) takes place in a Michigan forest. The owl, the chickadee, the fox pup, the monarch butterfly, the mountain lion, the wild pig, the deer, the alligator, and the winter bird each have a book devoted to them. Taken as a whole, the series enables young readers to understand the full range of nature's activity.

Another popular nonfiction series for children is the "One Day" books, which George wrote between 1983 and 1990. Devoted to a day in the desert, the alpine tundra, the prairie, the woods, or the tropical rain forest, each book is a brief study of a particular ecological "niche" and how the weather, animals, birds, and humans living in it interact on a given day.

Among the many other nonfiction books for children and young adults that Jean George has written, *Spring Comes to the Ocean* (1965) is her favorite. Each chapter concentrates on a specific type of ocean creature and its response to the changing of the seasons in the Atlantic or the Pacific Ocean. The book's only humans are a team of oceanographers trying to study a baby whale.

George's "ecological mysteries," which explore the reasons behind certain unexplained events in nature, are also popular. *Who Really Killed Cock Robin?* (1971), for example, delves into the causes of a robin's sudden death and what it means for the bird's mate and her eggs. In solving the mystery, two teenagers learn some complicated lessons about the food chain and the role played by pollutants. *The Missing Gator of Gumbo Limbo* (1992), *The Fire Bug Connection* (1993), and *The Case of the Missing Cutthroat Trout* (1996) are some of the other books that reveal George's desire to show children how to seek out the underlying causes of natural events.

Speaking from Experience

Summer of the Falcon (1962) is about a young girl who trains a sparrow hawk and, in doing so, learns about self-discipline and her own independence. Much of George's knowledge about falcons came from her twin brothers, experts on the subject who were publishing articles on falconry in the *Saturday Evening Post* and *National Geographic* while they were still in high school.

Water Sky (1987) came out of a trip that George made to visit her son Craig, who was studying bowhead whales at a camp on the Arctic ice. When George arrived in April, the temperature was 35 degrees below zero. She was given a rifle to carry and warned about possible attacks from hungry polar bears. One of the young scientists staying at the camp was sitting in the cook tent one day when he saw a huge white paw with long black claws opening the tent's zipper. This incident and other Arctic experiences later found their way into *Water Sky*, the story of a New England teenager who goes to Alaska to find his missing uncle. During his stay, he learns a great deal about the Arctic ice and the creatures of the sea from the Eskimos, who are able to predict the weather and the whales' behavior more accurately than any modern scientist with special equipment.

The Cry of the Crow (1980) was based on George's experiences with her family's pet crow, named Crowbar, who learned how to speak, how to sneak food from the neighbors' picnic tables, and even how to slide down a children's playground slide on a tin can lid. Eventually a flock of wild crows passed through the yard on their annual migration and persuaded Crowbar to leave.

The Tarantula in My Purse (1996) tells the story of some of the other wild pets that George and her children raised, including a female tarantula that George found crossing the road on a western Kansas prairie. She brought it home in a baggie in her purse, and it ended up living with the family for 12 years.

Jean George floated down the Colorado River before she wrote *River Rats, Inc.* (1979) and was inspired to write *Shark Beneath the Reef* when she saw an enormous hammerhead shark while snorkeling off the coast of Baja, Mexico. Her children and grandchildren have provided her with the ideas for many of her books. *The Moon of the Monarch Butterflies* (1968) was the response to her daughter Twig's question about what animals did in the month of May. And when her granddaughter asked her what winter was, the answer became *Dear Rebecca, Winter is Here* (1993).

George's works have been praised by critics for their detailed and often poetic descriptions of animals and their habitats, and for the concern they show for the natural environment. Many of her books are about children searching for independence and self-knowledge. As they observe the mysteries of nature, they learn more about themselves. George's ability to share her love of nature and wildlife have made her a favorite with young readers everywhere. In works like *My Side of the Mountain* and *Julie of the Wolves* she has introduced a generation of readers to the joys and mysteries of the wild spaces, inspiring awe and reverence for the natural splendor of the wilderness.

ADVICE TO YOUNG WRITERS

When she's speaking to young people who want to be writers, Jean George encourages them to find a subject that interests them and then become experts in it. "In any kind of writing," she says, "I have discovered that I must be involved. I must participate, and then I can write much better."

MEMORABLE EXPERIENCES

One of the first wild animals that George brought into her house to observe its behavior was a young female red fox. The fox learned to use kitty litter and made her den in the fireplace. Because the fox was only awake at night, George had to stay up late to observe her activities, often playing with her by throwing tennis balls.

One very dark night George went out on her back porch to play with the fox and threw a tennis ball up in the air. It never hit the ground, but it was so dark that she couldn't see what had happened to it. "Presently, it was back in my hand. I threw it up again—no sound—it didn't even bounce," George recalls. "Back it came into my hand, and I knew that here was another world, other things to see, eyes that could see in the dark. I began delving more into the behavior in the lives of wild animals."

HOBBIES AND OTHER INTERESTS

Over the years that she has been writing, George has never lost her need to be surrounded by the hills and forests and animals that inspired her first childhood poems. To stay in touch with the natural world, she hikes, canoes, and camps out under the stars. She keeps lost birds, baby raccoons, toads, and bullfrogs in her house, and she likes to travel to "wild and inspiring" places.

All three of the George children have followed in her footsteps. Twig writes children's books, Luke teaches population biology in California, and Craig studies bowhead whales near his home in Alaska. Jean's twin brothers, Frank and John, are now leading experts on the grizzly bears of Wyoming.

WRITINGS

Self-Illustrated Juvenile Fiction (with John Lothar George)

Vulpes the Red Fox, 1948
Vison the Mink, 1949
Masked Prowler, The Story of a Raccoon, 1950
Meph the Pet Skunk, 1952
Bubo the Great Horned Owl, 1954
Dipper of Copper Creek, 1956

Self-Illustrated Juvenile Fiction (as Jean George)

The Hole in the Tree, 1957
Snow Tracks, 1958
My Side of the Mountain, 1959
The Summer of the Falcon, 1962
Red Robin Fly Up! 1963
Gull Number 737, 1964
Hold Zero!, 1966
Water Sky, 1987
On the Far Side of the Mountain, 1990

Juvenile Fiction

Coyote in Manhattan, 1968
All Upon a Stone, 1971
Who Really Killed Cock Robin?, 1971
Julie of the Wolves, 1972

All Upon a Sidewalk, 1974
Hook a Fish, Catch a Mountain, 1975
Going to the Sun, 1976
The Wentletrap Trap, 1978
The Wounded Wolf, 1978
River Rats,, Inc., 1979
The Cry of the Crow, 1980
The Grizzly Bear with the Golden Ears, 1982
The Talking Earth, 1983
Shark Beneath the Reef, 1989
The Missing Gator of Gumbo Limbo, 1992
The Fire Bug Connection, 1993
Dear Rebecca, Winter is Here, 1993
Julie, 1994
To Climb a Waterfall, 1995
There's an Owl in the Shower, 1995
The Everglades, 1995
The Case of the Missing Cutthroat Trout, 1996
Julie's Wolf Pack, 1997
Arctic Son, 1997
Look to the North: A Wolf Pup Diary, 1997

Juvenile Nonfiction

Spring Comes to the Ocean, 1965
Beastly Inventions: A Surprising Investigation into How Smart Animals Really Are, 1970
Everglades Wildguide, 1972
The American Walk Book, 1978
The Wild, Wild Cookbook, 1982
Journey Inward (autobiography), 1982
How to Talk to Your Animals, 1985
How to Talk to Your Dog, 1986
How to Talk to Your Cat, 1986
The First Thanksgiving, 1993
Animals Who Have Won Our Hearts, 1994
The Everglades, 1994
Acorn Pancakes, Dandelion Salad, and 38 Other Wild Recipes, 1995
The Tarantula in My Purse, 1996

Juvenile Nonfiction Series

The "Thirteen Moons" Series, 1967-69
One Day in the . . . [Desert, Alpine Tundra, Prairie, Woods, Tropical Rain Forest], 1983-90

Other

Tree House (play), 1962
(Illustrator) John J. Craighead and Frank C. Craighead, Jr., *Hawks, Owls, and Wildlife*, 1969
My Side of the Mountain (film adaptation), 1969

HONORS AND AWARDS

Aurianne Award (American Library Association): 1956, for *Dipper of Copper Creek*
Woman of the Year Award (Pennsylvania State University): 1968
George C. Stone Center for Children's Books Award: 1969, for *My Side of the Mountain*
Claremont College Award: 1969
Eva L. Gordon Award (American Nature Study Society): 1970
Book World First Prize: 1971, for *All Upon a Stone*
John Newbery Medal (American Library Association): 1973, for *Julie of the Wolves*
Irvin Kerlan Award (University of Minnesota): 1982
University of Southern Mississippi Award: 1986
Grumman Award: 1986
Washington Irving Award (Westchester Library Association): 1991
Knickerbocker Award for Juvenile Literature (New York Public Library Association): 1991

FURTHER READING

Books

Authors and Artists for Young Adults, Vol. 8
Berger, Laura Standley, ed. *Twentieth-Century Young Adult Writers*, 1994
Contemporary Authors New Revision Series, Vol. 25
Dictionary of Literary Biography, Vol. 52
Gallo, Donald R., ed. *Speaking for Ourselves: Autobiographical Sketches by Notable Authors of Books for Young Adults*, 1990

Laughlin, Jeannine and Sherry. *Children's Authors Speak,* 1993
Silvey, Anita, ed. *Children's Books and Their Creators,* 1995
Something About the Author, Vol. 68
Who's Who in America, 1997

Periodicals

Horn Book Magazine, Mar.-Apr. 1994, p.170
Miami Herald, May 12, 1995, p.F1
New York Times Book Review, Nov. 10, 1996, p.46
Tallahassee Democrat, Nov. 15, 1994, p.D1
Teaching K-8, May 1994, p.40

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E.L. Konigsburg 1930-

American Writer for Children
Author of *From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler* and *The View from Saturday*

BIRTH

Elaine Lobl Konigsburg was born in New York City on February 10, 1930. Her parents were Adolph and Beulah (Klein) Lobl. The second of three children, she has an older sister, Harriett, and a younger one, Sherry.

YOUTH

Konigsburg grew up in several small towns around Pennsylvania and Ohio. The family moved to Phoenixville, Pennsylvania, shortly after she was born. Then in 1939, when she was nine, they moved to Youngstown, Ohio, which is on the western border of Pennsylvania. They lived in two different houses during their two years there. In 1941, they moved to Farrell, Pennsylvania.

During those early years, according to Konigsburg, "I think I was a very timid child—I think I was very obedient. I was always a very good student, and I was always a bit of an outsider." That feeling of being an outsider was intensified, according to Konigsburg, by being the only Jewish child in her class throughout much of her youth.

Konigsburg has described her parents as loving and supportive. Although they did not encourage her to read or to write, they did encourage learning. And they nurtured her interest in art, as she recalls here. "One day I was supposed to be taking a nap, or something. Instead I went upstairs and drew, copied actually, some comics—I think it was *L'il Abner* by Al Capp. My mother saw my copies, and she didn't scold me for missing my nap. She praised my drawing. Both my parents praised me for the drawing—and my father ordered a set of oil paints from the Sears catalog, and got me a little wooden easel, and I painted."

EARLY MEMORIES

Here, Konigsburg talks about her reading habits as a child. "As I was growing up I used to read in the bathroom a lot. It was the only room in our house that had a lock on the door, and I could run water in the tub to muffle the sounds of my sobbing over Rhett Butler's leaving Scarlett [in *Gone with the Wind*]. Reading was tolerated in my house, but it wasn't sanctioned like dusting furniture or baking cookies. My parents never minded what I read, but they did mind *when* (like before the dishes were done) and *where* (there was only one bathroom in our house). I used to read a lot of trash."

But now, Konigsburg says, many parents worry too much about what their children are reading. "Suburban mothers have moved into reading and, having done so, live in fear of their children's wasting their time. 'If you're going to read, read the right books. Don't waste your time reading trash; there is so much to know'."

But Konigsburg believes that kids have to try out all types of material. "[If] kids can't waste their time exploring the bad with the good when they're young, when will they ever be able to develop a personal sense of taste? You can't recognize red if you've never seen it. Or purple prose. Or yellow journalism, either."

EDUCATION

Konigsburg attended first through mid-fifth grade in the Phoenixville public schools, and then continued fifth grade in Youngstown at the William McKinley Elementary School. One of her toughest experiences in school came when she was in sixth grade there. Midway during the school year, her family decided to move to another house in Youngstown because they needed to find a cheaper place to live. Their new home was in a different school district in Youngstown. The principal at William McKinley, Mr. Perkins, thought it would be better for Elaine to finish off the year in the same school. So he suggested that she should be bused to school, and her parents agreed. For the rest of the year, Elaine and her sister rode a public bus to school.

Konigsburg couldn't go home for lunch, like the other kids did. So she ate lunch at school, along with one other girl. "When I was in sixth grade, I used to go upstairs at lunchtime and draw on the blackboard. Another girl, Roseann Dolores Ansevino, was also being bused to William McKinley—I don't know why. She and I did not get along; in fact, she once called me "a dirty Jew." However, after I drew a giant fly on the blackboard upstairs, she invited everyone to come and admire it. We got to be friendly."

Her description of that time will sound familiar to readers of her story "Momma at the Pearly Gates" from *Altogether, One at a Time,* the only autobiographical piece she has ever written. In the story, the little girl is the only African-American child in the school, while in reality Konigsburg was the only Jewish child in the school. That fact, she says, contributed to her feelings of being an outsider. Yet it had a positive effect as well, as she explains here. "Probably being an outsider does give you a chance to internalize an awful lot more. You're not pulled by peers. You don't have a peer group when you are an outsider, and you become more yourself, maybe."

After moving to Farrell, Pennsylvania, Konigsburg attended Farrell Junior High School. She enjoyed her art classes there, even winning a War Bond for one of her drawings. Her study of art came to a temporary halt at Farrell Senior High School, where no art classes were offered. Instead, she worked on the yearbook and served as co-editor of the school newspaper, winning an award for a story on the homecoming queen. In 1947, Konigsburg graduated from Farrell High School with highest honors. She was the class valedictorian.

Konigsburg didn't have enough money for college, and she didn't know that there might be scholarships available for talented students. So she devised a plan. She would spend one year working and saving, and then one year at school. By the end of the year she would be broke and would have to go back to work for another year to afford to return to school. At that rate, it would take her eight years just to finish her bachelor's degree! So she spent her first year after high school working as a bookkeeper in Sharon, Pennsylvania, for Shenango Valley Provision Company, a wholesale meat plant. While there she met her future husband, David Konigsburg, who was the brother of one of the owners.

College Years

In 1948, Konigsburg enrolled at Carnegie Mellon Institute of Technology (now called Carnegie Mellon University) in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. At the time, she had no plans to study art or writing; instead, she planned to major in chemistry. "If I had in mind eventually to be a writer and artist, the notion was so deeply submerged that I was unaware of it. Besides, if you were the first person in your family to go to college, you didn't say you were going away to become a writer. You said you were going away to become *something*—a librarian, a teacher, a chemist, a *something*. I chose chemistry because I was good at it and there would be jobs waiting when I finished. In Farrell, I never met anyone who made his living from the arts."

By the end of her first year, she expected to have to follow her plan of working for a year to earn enough money to return for her second year of college. But one day that spring, while walking across campus, her English professor stopped her and asked about her plans. As she says, "When I told him I would be returning to my job for another year, he said, '*Miss* Lobl, I think that this school would not choose to lose students of your *ilk*.' Thanks to his intervention, I was able to get a scholarship. I had jobs all through school—in the library, managing a laundry service in the dormitory—and I remained *enrolled*." In 1952 Konigsburg graduated from Carnegie Mellon with honors, with a Bachelor of Science (B.S.) degree in chemistry. That summer, she and David Konigsburg were married.

She then enrolled in the graduate program in chemistry at the University of Pittsburgh in 1952; her husband was also there working on his degree in psychology. "After two years there," Konigsburg recalls, "I had passed all those courses with flying colors; unfortunately, that is also the way I passed the lab classes. There the colors flew because of a few explosions in the sink." As she says, "I'm convinced that, had I not been such a disaster in the lab, I could have made a contribution to chemistry, something creative. I had the mind for it, but not the temperament. There was all that awful lab work to get through. And there was no one to tell me that it is only in the higher reaches that science and art are one." In 1954, when her husband finished his degree and got a job in Florida, she left the University of Pittsburgh without completing her degree.

FIRST JOBS

In 1954, they moved to Jacksonville, Florida. Konigsburg began teaching science at Bertram School, a private girls' school there. During her first year, as she recalls here, "I began to suspect that chemistry was not my field. Not only did I always ask my students to light my Bunsen burner, having become match-shy, but I became more interested in what was going on inside of them than what was going on inside the test tubes." She became fascinated by the inner lives of her students, whom she called "softly comfortable on the outside and solidly uncomfortable on the inside." With her first baby on the way, she quit teaching in 1955. Paul, her oldest son, was born just a few weeks later; Laurie, her only daughter, was born the following year, and Ross, the youngest, was born in 1959.

Soon after Laurie was born Konigsburg began to paint, taking formal painting lessons at the Jacksonville Art Museum. One of her paintings even won first prize in a Jacksonville County Fair art competition. In 1960, after her youngest child was born, she returned to teaching science at Bertram School, remaining there until 1962 when the family moved north again. During the next five years they lived in two suburbs of New York City: first in Saddle Brook, New Jersey, from 1962 to 1963, and then in Port Chester, New York, from 1963 until 1967. Living in the New York City area was a revelatory experience for Konigsburg; she once called it "a kind of graduate school." Each Saturday, she would go into the city and spend the morning taking drawing classes at the Art Students League, then she would spend the afternoon touring the city's many museums and galleries. It was during this time that Konigsburg began to write.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

In 1965, when her kids were all old enough to attend school, Konigsburg began work on her first book. As a busy homemaker with three young children, she found that "work, especially housework, expands to fill the time available." It was hard to find the time to write. "I learned that no one respects the housewife's time. I had waited in every pediatrician's office, every dentist's office, and even at the shoe store for my boys to be fitted for orthopedic shoes. Once when I telephoned a supermarket and asked to speak to the butcher, I was not allowed. They would give him my message and I could call back to find out what he said. His time, too, was more valuable than mine. I realized that no one would value my time except me. So I decided that I would take the mornings—not make a bed, not do the dishes —and write. . . . When my kids came home [from school] for lunch, I would often read them what I'd written and watch their reactions." How they responded determined what she would do next: "They laugh or they don't," she said at the time, "which means I revise or I don't."

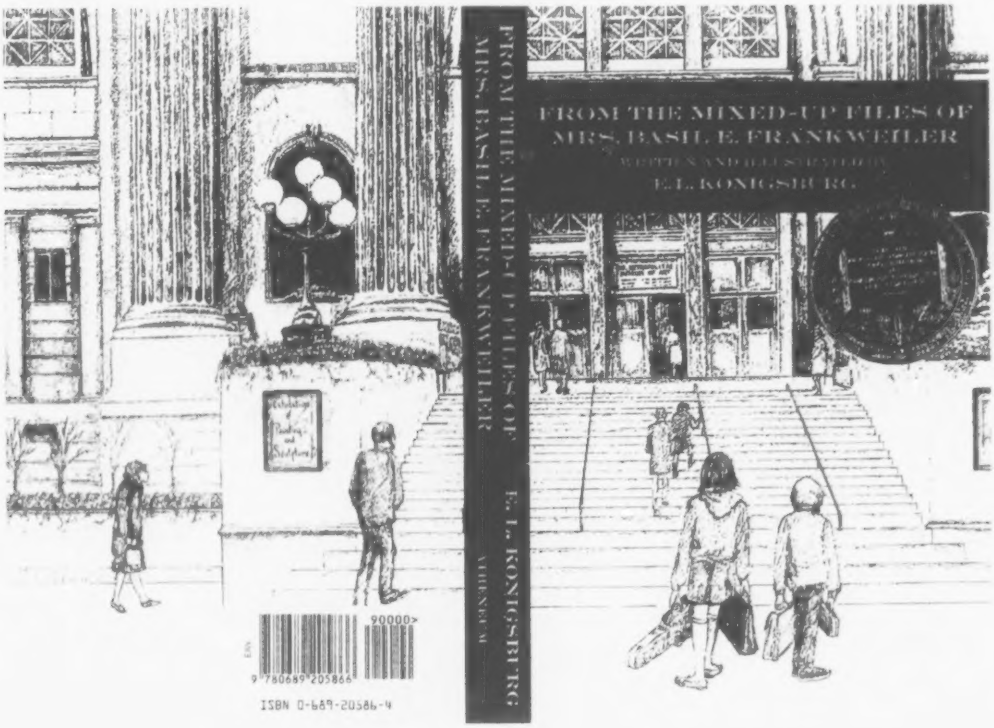
Konigsburg wanted to create books that would have appealed to her as a child, contemporary stories that would be meaningful to the kids that she used to teach in Florida, or even to her own kids. "As I was growing up, I would pick up a book whose jacket would promise that I would meet typical children in a typical small town. Instead, I would meet wimpy lads who took naps and who had faithful servants and patient mothers. I had lived in three small towns and never knew anyone who had a maid. I began to fear that my own three children would also grow up without meeting themselves in books, so I wanted to write something that reflected their kind of growing up, which I call middle-class suburban. I began writing a story based on something that happened to my own daughter when she was the new kid in the neighborhood—and that neighborhood was a suburb of New York."

She soon finished writing and illustrating her first book, *Jennifer, Hecate, Macbeth, William McKinley, and Me, Elizabeth*. This story is about Elizabeth, a young girl who moves to a new area and tries to make new friends, particularly with one girl, Jennifer, who claims that she is a witch. The story was based on the experiences of Konigsburg's daughter after the family moved to Port Chester, New York. She sent the book in to Atheneum Press as an unsolicited manuscript, even though publishers rarely decide to publish such books. Yet the editors at Atheneum were so impressed with the work of this unknown author that they did decide to publish the book in 1967.

In the meantime, Konigsburg went to work on writing and illustrating her next book, *From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler*, which Atheneum also published in 1967. The following year, *From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler* was awarded the Newbery Medal, the most prestigious award in children's literature, and her first book, *Jennifer, Hecate, Macbeth, William McKinley, and Me, Elizabeth*, was voted a Newbery Honor Book. With her very first two books, Konigsburg made literary history by becoming the only Newbery author ever to win both awards in the same year.

From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler

From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler is Konigsburg's best-known book. She has said that it was inspired by several different experiences, including a book she had read about children being captured by pirates and becoming pirates themselves, plus a newspaper story about a museum that purchased a statue for $225 that was thought to be the work of Leonardo da Vinci. She was also inspired by a picnic she took with her family while on vacation at Yellowstone National Park. They bought provisions for the picnic—bread and salami, pickles, potato chips, chocolate milk, and cupcakes—and found a clearing in the woods to enjoy their lunch. "Then the complaints began: the chocolate milk was getting warm, and there were ants over everything, and the sun was melting the icing on the cupcakes. This was hardly having to rough it, and yet my small group could think of nothing but the discomfort."


FROM THE MIXED-UP FILES OF
MRS. BASIL E. FRANKWEILER
WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY
E.L. KONIGSBURG
FROM THE MIXED-UP FILES OF MRS. BASIL E. FRANKWEILER
E. L. KONIGSBURG
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She continues, "I thought to myself that if my children ever left home, they would never become barbarians even if they were captured by pirates. Civilization was not a veneer to them; it was a crust. They would want at least all the comforts of home plus a few dashes of extra elegance. Where, I wondered, would they ever consider running to if they ever left home? They certainly would never consider any place less elegant than the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

"Yes, the Metropolitan Museum of Art. All those magnificent beds and all that elegance. And then, I thought, while they were there, perhaps they would discover the secret of a mysterious bargain statue and in doing so, perhaps they could discover a much more important secret, the need to be different — on the inside, where it counts."

Konigsburg took all these pieces — the story about the pirate children, the one about the statue, and the one about the family picnic — and combined them in *From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler*. It tells the story of Claudia and Jamie, a sister and brother who run away from home and stay at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. During the day they hide out from the guards, but at night they take baths in a fountain and sleep in a musty 16th-century bed. They also try to discover who created Angel, a statue donated to the museum that many believe was sculpted by Michelangelo. Claudia and Jamie go to visit the donor, Mrs. Frankweiler, to try to solve the mystery. It is Mrs. Frankweiler who explains Claudia's decision to run away from home, which embodies the main idea of the novel: "Claudia doesn't want adventure. She likes baths and feeling comfortable too much for that kind of thing. Secrets are the kind of adventure she needs. Secrets are safe, and they do much to make you different. On the inside, where it counts."

In these early works, as well as her later books for young readers, Konigsburg often explores an important theme: a child's search for identity, particularly the struggle to retain a sense of self in relation to a peer group. Here she describes "the most basic concerns that middle-age children have: Who am I? What makes me the same as everyone else? What makes me different from everyone else?"

More Books for Young Readers

Konigsburg explores these ideas in a series of books for young readers. Many of her writings are novels that deal with contemporary problems facing kids today. *About the B'nai Bagels* (1969) is the story of Mark, a boy who feels his parents are always invading his privacy and interfering with his life. This interference is made worse when his mother becomes the coach of his Little League baseball team. *(George)* (1970) tells the story of Ben Dickinson Carr and the little man who lives inside his head, George. For adults, George is a figment of Ben's imagination, but for Ben, George is his inner self. In *The Dragon in the Ghetto Caper* (1974), Andrew J. Chronister, an 11-year-old from a wealthy, privileged community, has his first real experience with the outside world. *Father's Arcane Daughter* (1976) tells the story of the Carmichael family. Seventeen years ago, the oldest daughter, Caroline, was kidnaped. One day a woman claiming to be Caroline shows up, and she has a profound impact on the lives of the two overprotected children in the family, Winston and Heidi. In *Journey to an 800 Number* (1982) we meet 12- year-old Max (also known as Bo), a student at an expensive private school. His parents are divorced, his mother (with whom he lives) has recently remarried, so Max goes off to see his father, a hippie who travels around the country selling rides on his camel, Ahmed. For Max, the trip proves to be a voyage of discovery as he learns about his parents and himself. *Up from Jericho Tel* (1986) combines fantasy with a mystery story about two children, Jeanmarie Troxell and Malcolm Soo, who go on a journey of self-discovery as they follow a ghost's lead and search for a stolen jewel. In *T-Backs, T-Shirts, COAT, and Suit* (1993), 12-year-old Chloe from suburban New Jersey goes to Florida to stay with her aunt, a former hippie who now drives a food-service van. The novel describes their growing relationship, as well as exploring the complex issues of personal values and freedom of expression.

In addition to these contemporary novels, Konigsburg has also written two collections of innovative short stories about children: *Altogether, One at a Time*

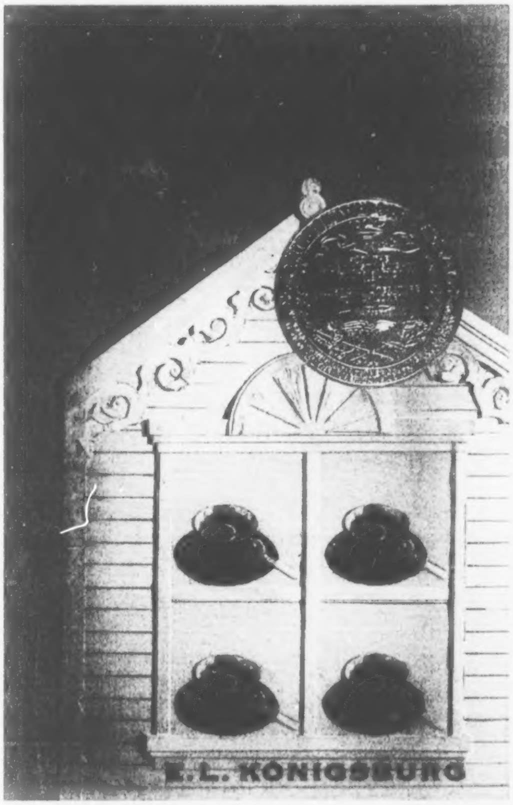
(1971) and *Throwing Shadows* (1979). Her other works include two historical novels: *A Proud Taste for Scarlet and Miniver* (1973), which uses four different narrators with different points of view to tell the story of Eleanor of Aquitaine, who was the wife of Louis VII of France and Henry II of England during the middle ages; and *The Second Mrs. Giaconda* (1975), which outlines the life of Leonardo da Vinci, with an emphasis on his relationship with his assistant, Salai, as da Vinci prepares to paint the Mona Lisa.

In the meantime, Konigsburg also started writing books for younger children. The first, *Samuel Todd's Book of Great Colors* (1990) came about as a bit of a fluke. She made a small picture book for her young grandson, Samuel, who was having trouble learning his colors. Then her daughter Laurie Konigsburg Todd, who is Sam's mother, showed it off to all of her friends, and everyone liked it so much that Konigsburg decided to submit it to her publisher. The book turned out so well that both it and its sequel, *Samuel Todd's Book of Great Inventions* (1991), were published. The following year brought *Amy Elizabeth Explores Bloomingdale's* (1992), a story about a grandmother and her granddaughter Amy Elizabeth, who is based on Konigsburg's own granddaughter, as they set off to go shopping at a New York department store.

The View from Saturday

Konigsburg's most recent work is *The View from Saturday* (1996). In this book, she tells the story of four students chosen by their teacher, Mrs. Olinski, to be members of a team that will compete in the sixth-grade Academic Bowl. No one is quite sure how Mrs. Olinski chose these four students to form the team. And even Mrs. Olinski can't understand how the team, which calls itself "The Souls," keeps beating older, more sophisticated teams. Neither will the reader, until the students' backgrounds are revealed in a series of four first-person narratives, what *Publishers Weekly* called "a stunning quartet of harmoniously blended voices." In 1997, *The View from Saturday* won the Newbery Medal, almost 30 years after Konigsburg won the award the first time in 1968 for *From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler*. Elated, Konigsburg said, "Any word I could use to express my reaction would be a total understatement."

Perhaps it is not surprising that Konigsburg's own daughter, Laurie Konigsburg Todd, has best summed up the theme of her works. "Every one of E. L. Konigsburg's 14 novels [is] about children who seek, find, and ultimately enjoy who they are. Despite this common denominator, E. L. Konigsburg's writing is the antithesis of the formula book. Her characters are one-of-a-kind. . . . Mom always lets her characters speak for themselves. At the same time, she persists in having them speak to the core of her readers. Thirty years has not changed the fundamental identity of Mom's audience—middle-aged children who crave acceptance by their peers as desperately as they yearn to be appreciated for their differences. E. L. Konigsburg's success can be attributed to the fact that when children read any of her novels, they see themselves, and they laugh."



MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

Elaine Lobl and David Konigsburg were married on July 6, 1952. They had three children: Paul, Laurie, and Ross, who are now all grown up and married. Konigsburg and her family moved from the metropolitan New York area to Jacksonville, Florida, in 1967. Currently, Elaine and David Konigsburg live in a house on the beach near Jacksonville.

ADVICE FOR YOUNG WRITERS

Konigsburg has this piece of advice for those who aspire to write: "*Finish.* The difference between being a writer and being a person of talent is the discipline it takes to apply the seat of your pants to the seat of your chair and finish. Don't talk about it. Do it. Finish."

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Jennifer, Hecate, Macbeth, William McKinley, and Me, Elizabeth, 1967
From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler, 1967
About the B'nai Bagels, 1969
(George), 1970
Altogether, One at a Time, 1971
A Proud Taste for Scarlet and Miniver, 1973
The Dragon in the Ghetto Caper, 1974
The Second Mrs. Giaconda, 1975
Father's Arcane Daughter, 1976
Throwing Shadows, 1979
Journey to an 800 Number, 1982
Up from Jericho Tel, 1986

T-Backs, T-Shirts, COAT, and Suit, 1993
TalkTalk: A Children's Book Author Speaks to Grown-Ups, 1995
The View from Saturday, 1996

For Younger Readers

Samuel Todd's Book of Great Colors, 1990
Samuel Todd's Book of Great Inventions, 1991
Amy Elizabeth Explores Bloomingdale's, 1992

HONORS AND AWARDS

John Newbery Medal (American Library Association): 1968, for *From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler*; 1997, for *The View from Saturday*
Lewis Carroll Shelf Award: 1968, for *From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler*
William Allen White Children's Book Award (William Allen White Library): 1970, for *From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler*
Carnegie-Mellon Merit Award: 1971
Notable Children's Books (American Library Association): 1974, for *A Proud Taste for Scarlet and Miniver*; 1980, for *Throwing Shadows*; 1987, for *Up from Jericho Tel*
Best Book for Young Adults: (American Library Association): 1975, for *The Second Mrs. Giaconda*; 1976, for *Father's Arcane Daughter*
Notable Book for Young Adults (American Library Association): 1977, for *Father's Arcane Daughter*

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Drew, Bernard A. *The 100 Most Popular Young Adult Authors: Biographical Sketches andBibliographies*, 1996
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ADDRESS

Atheneum Publishers
866 Third Avenue
New York, NY 10022

C. S. Lewis 1898-1963

Irish-Born English Scholar and Author of the Narnia Chronicles, the Ransom Trilogy, and Scholarly and Religious Writings

BIRTH

C. S. Lewis was born Clive Staples Lewis on November 29, 1898, in Belfast, Northern Ireland. He was always known by his friends and family as Jack. His father, Albert Lewis, was a police court solicitor (lawyer). His mother, Florence (called Flora) Hamilton Lewis, was a homemaker who had earned a degree with honors in mathematics at Queen's University at Belfast—a notable accomplishment for a woman in the late 19th century, when it was rare for women to attend college. He had one brother, Warren, nicknamed Warnie, who was three years older.

YOUTH

Lewis led a sheltered, quiet early life that was also marked by death and sorrow. He grew up in a house filled with books and started reading before he was five. One of the first books he remembered was *Squirrel Nutkin* by Beatrix Potter. He also loved *Gulliver's Travels* by Jonathan Swift, *The Story of the Amulet* and other novels by E. Nesbit, and *Snow Queen* by Hans Christian Andersen. By the time he was five he was writing little essays about books he had read. He wrote in his autobiography, *Surprised by Joy*, that the reason he began writing was that a physical defect he was born with—a missing thumb joint—made it difficult for him to do much of anything that required manual dexterity, except to write.

One of his first fantasy projects was "Animal-Land." "I wrote about chivalrous mice and rabbits who rode out in complete mail to kill not giants but cats. . . . The Animal-Land which came into action . . . was a modern Animal-Land; it had to have trains and steamships." Eventually, he "set about writing a full history of Animal-Land. . . . From history it was only a step to geography. There was soon a map of Animal-Land." Thus the creator of Narnia was plotting fantasy stories with animal heroes when he was only five.

Lewis was six when Warnie was first sent away to school. He and Warnie had always been very close, and Lewis missed him terribly. He wrote of this lonely time in his autobiography: "I am a product of long corridors, empty sunlit rooms, upstairs indoor silences, attics explored in solitude, distant noises of gurgling cisterns and pipes, and the noise of wind under the tiles. Also of endless books. . . . There were books in the study, books in the drawing room, books in the cloakroom, books (two deep) in the great bookcase on the landing, books in a bedroom, books piled as high as my shoulder in the cistern attic, books of all kinds reflecting every transient stage of my parents' interest, books readable and unreadable, books suitable for a child and books most emphatically not. Nothing was forbidden me. In the seemingly endless rainy afternoons I took volume after volume from the shelves. I had always the certainty of finding a book that was new to me as a man who walks into a field has of finding a new blade of grass."

Tragedy struck Lewis's young life when his mother died of cancer when he was nine years old. Lewis described this experience in his autobiography: "Children suffer not (I think) less than their elders, but differently. For us boys the real bereavement had happened before our mother died. We lost her gradually as she was gradually withdrawn from our life into the hands of nurses and delirium and morphia [morphine], and as our whole existence changed into something alien and menacing, as the house became full of strange smells and midnight noises and sinister whispered conversations."

EDUCATION

Lewis's education had started at home, where his mother taught him French and Latin, but that all changed with her death. Lewis's father became emotionally unbalanced, losing his temper frequently and growing distant from the boys. Two weeks after their mother's death, Lewis and Warnie were sent away to boarding school in England. Lewis was only nine, and he remembered it as a horrible experience. The chapter in his autobiography in which he wrote about it is titled "Concentration Camp." The only consolation was that his brother was there, too.

At that time, it was not uncommon for teachers to beat students in schools. Lewis remembered it this way: "The only stimulating element in the teaching consisted of a few well-used canes which hung on the green iron chimney piece of the single schoolroom. . . . The curious thing is that despite all the cruelty. . . we did surprisingly little work. This may have been partly because the cruelty was irrational and unpredictable," he recalled. When it was evident that the school was doing his sons no good, Albert Lewis sent them to a different English school. There the conditions were somewhat better, but Lewis disliked the school's emphasis on sports.

When Lewis was 16 he was sent to study with his father's former tutor, which proved to be the most beneficial formal learning experience Lewis had had up to that point. Lewis read Greek and Roman classical literature, German and Italian literature, and studied philosophy. Early on, Lewis was drawn to a literary career. Specifically, he wanted to be a poet, but realized that he couldn't earn a living at it. In any case, college was the next step.

College Years

Lewis was admitted to University College, part of the prestigious colleges that make up Oxford University. He enrolled in the Officer Training Corps when he learned that if he were in the Corps he wouldn't have to take an exam in math, never his strong subject.

Lewis started college in 1917, when World War I was raging on the continent of Europe. After his first term (or semester), he enlisted in the British Army and was sent in France. He later told one of his students at Magdalen College at Oxford that when he first encountered front-line combat and heard the guns firing, "a voice in his head said, 'This is war. This is what you read about in Homer'." He was wounded and returned to England to recover. Once there, he wrote his father and pleaded with him to visit, but his father never did. It was another example of his father's emotional distance from his sons. Years later, Lewis's brother Warren remembered that their father was a "peculiar man in some respects," who would do almost anything to avoid "a break in the dull routine of his daily existence."

After his convalescence, Lewis returned to Oxford and spent the next three years distinguishing himself as a student of English Literature. He won the prestigious Chancellor's English Essay prize in 1921 and graduated from University College in 1922, with honors.

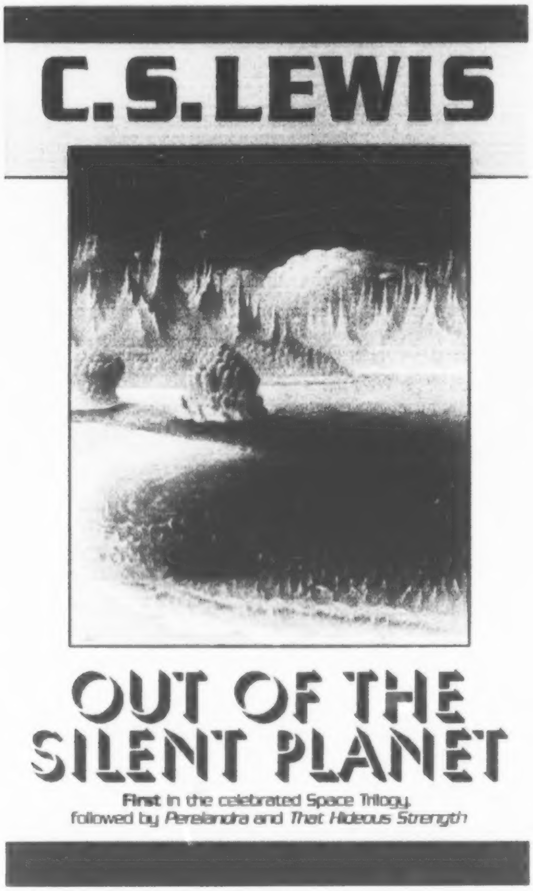
CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

Lewis had a distinguished career as a scholar of medieval literature, as a writer and speaker on Christianity, and as the author of a number of works of popular science fiction and fantasy. Although he is best known to young readers as the author of the Chronicles of Narnia, he enjoyed a worldwide reputation as a medieval scholar and as a writer of religious works. Some of his works on medieval history, like the *Allegory of Love* (1936), are among the most important works about the Middle Ages written in this century. His books and speeches on the Christian faith made him a popular author and radio figure during the middle of the 20th century. And his science fiction, with themes that related to his deeply held Christian faith, made him a favorite author with followers of that genre.

A respected scholar, Lewis taught at two of England's great universities, Oxford and Cambridge. He was a fellow and tutor of English Literature at Oxford from 1925 to 1954. From 1954 until his death in 1963, he was a professor of medieval English at Cambridge. During all those years of teaching, he continued to write the scholarly and popular works that made him famous.

Religious Conversion

All of Lewis's work was affected by his religious conversion, which occurred in 1929, when he was 31 and teaching at Oxford. Lewis had given up on the Anglican faith in which he had been raised after his mother's death. But in the summer of 1929 he had a spiritual experience that changed his life. While on a bus ride, he felt himself to be coated in a hard shell, like armor. He realized that he had a choice to stay that way, with his emotions bottled up, or remove it. He chose to remove it and felt as if he were "at last beginning to melt." That summer, Lewis remembered, "I gave in, and admitted that God was God, and knelt and prayed: perhaps, that night, the most dejected and reluctant convert in all England." From this point on, all of Lewis's writings were touched by his reawakened faith in Christianity.


C.S. LEWIS
OUT OF THE SILENT PLANET
First in the celebrated Space Trilogy,
followed by Perelandra and That Hideous Strength

Lewis's first works of science fiction date from the time of his conversion. His science-fiction/fantasy trilogy is sometimes referred to as the Ransom trilogy, named after the lead character. It includes *Out of the Silent Planet* (1938), *Perelandra* (1943), and *That Hideous Strength: A Modern Fairy-Tale for Grown-Ups* (1945). These novels, written for adult readers, tell of the adventures of John Ransom, who travels to Mars and Venus, finds brotherhood with many of the inhabitants, and successfully confronts evil and temptation.

Lewis first became famous in England after the publication of *The Screwtape Letters* (1942). The novel is made up of a series of letters from a devil who gives advice and encouragement to his nephew, an apprentice devil trying to earn his stripes by corrupting a human being. In this, as in all his fiction, Lewis outlines the eternal struggle of good and evil in an allegorical setting in which representatives of positive and negative forces vie for the hearts and souls of humankind.

At the same time that he was writing his fantasy and science fiction, Lewis was writing popular works on Christian faith. During World War II he gave talks on Christianity on BBC radio and was known to listeners around the globe. He became a fervent spokesman for the power of Christian faith in the face of world war and the profound loss and deprivation it meant to the people of England and the world.

Also in the 1940s, Lewis gathered regularly with a few other scholars at Oxford to discuss literature and read each other's work. The group included J.R.R. Tolkein, the author of *The Lord of the Rings*, Charles Williams, and Owen Barfield. They became known as the Inklings. These were the first people to hear about Lewis's own fantasy world of the Narnia Chronicles and to comment on the work as it developed.

The Narnia Chronicles

It was during World War II that Lewis began to formulate the work for which he is best known to young readers, his "Narnia Chronicles." The seven novels that make up the series are *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (1950), *Prince Caspian: The Return to Narnia* (1951), *The Voyage of the "Dawn Treader"* (1952), *The Silver Chair* (1953), *The Horse and His Boy* (1954), *The Magician's Nephew* (1955), and *The Last Battle* (1956).

The Narnia Chronicles begin in an old house in England. Four children, Lucy, Edmund, Peter, and Susan, have been sent to the house to live. They discover a passage through a "wardrobe"—what we would call a closet—that transports them to the magical land of Narnia. It is populated by all kinds of wonderful and frightening animals and creatures, as well as an evil witch.

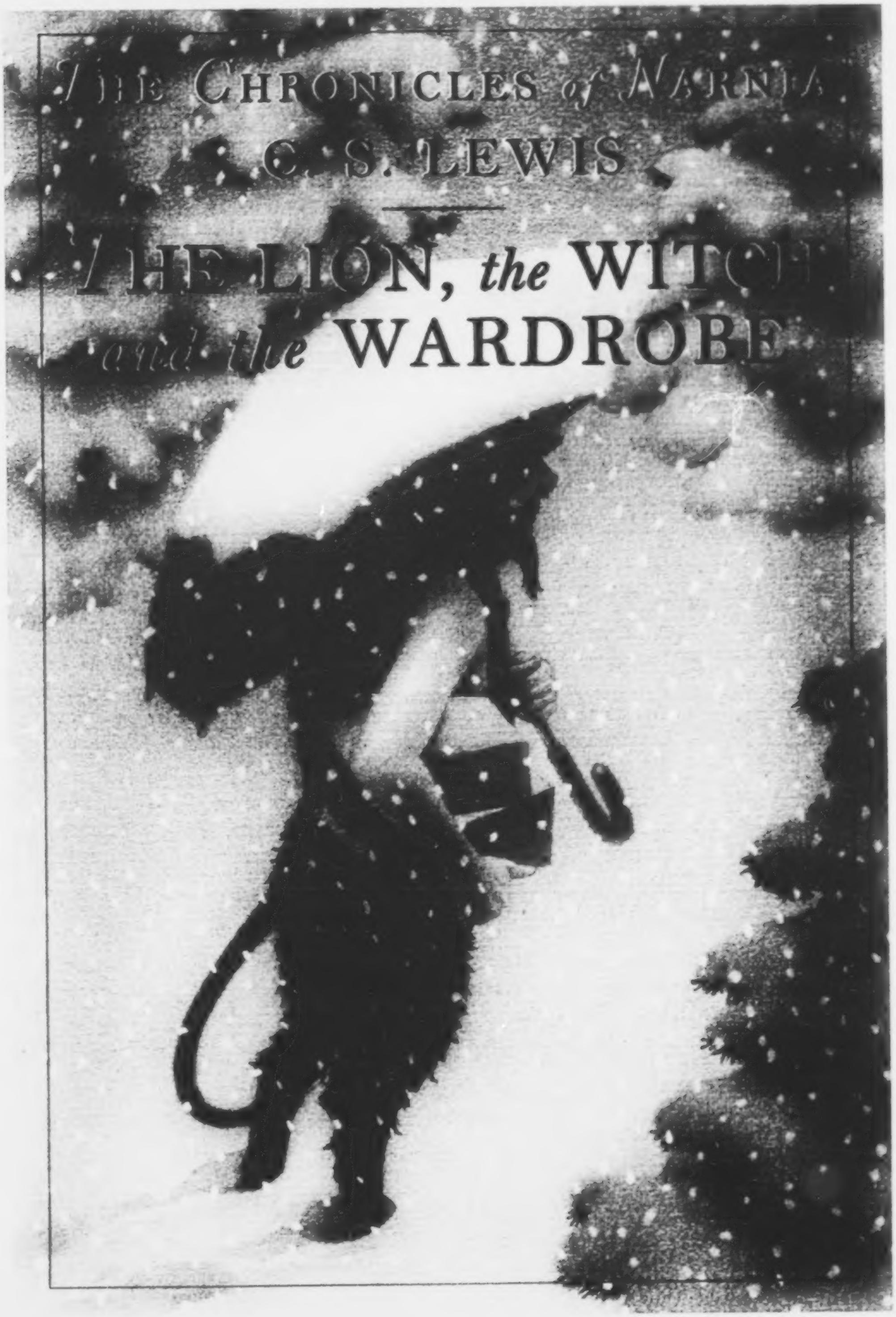
The most famous of the books is *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe,* which was the first one in the series that Lewis wrote. In this episode, the children meet the creatures of Narnia and are introduced to the great lion Aslan, the central force of good in Narnia and its creator. Soon a battle between the good and evil forces of Narnia takes place, with the children fighting bravely in support of the forces of Aslan against the evil witch and her minions. Later volumes take the children back to Narnia and on adventures throughout Lewis's fantasy kingdom.

Lewis had never written professionally for children when he wrote the Narnia stories, but he later said: "When I was 10, I read fairy tales in secret and would have been ashamed if I had been found doing so. Now that I am 50 I read them openly. When I became a man I put away childish things, including the fear of childishness and the desire to be very grown up." In writing the stories Lewis drew on his knowledge of Christianity as well as fairy tales, ancient religions, and myths (Norse, Greek, and Irish).

Lewis claimed that he could "see" characters before he wrote them down. "I see pictures. . . . I have no idea whether this is the usual way of writing stories, still less whether it is the best. It is the only one I know: images always come first. . . . Everything began with images; a faun carrying an umbrella, a queen on a sledge, a magnificent lion. At first there wasn't even anything Christian about them; that element pushed in of its own accord. I did not say to myself 'Let us represent Jesus as He really is in our world by a Lion in Narnia': I said 'Let us *suppose* that there were a land like Narnia and that the son of God, as He became a Man in our world, became a Lion there, and then imagine what would happen'."

The Narnia Chronicles are indeed highly symbolic Christian fables, with Aslan representing Christ. Lewis hoped his readers would think about the important themes of Christianity—forgiveness, love, hope, and faith—in new ways. One example can be seen in *The Voyage of the "Dawn Treader."*

Puddleglum, a Marsh-Wiggle, answers the witch's attempt to convince him and the children that Aslan's world is not real with a response that illustrates faith: "Suppose we have only dreamed, or made up, all those things — trees


THE CHRONICLES of NARNIA
C. S. LEWIS
THE LION, the WITCH and the WARDROBE

and grass and sun and moon and stars and Aslan himself. . . .Then all I can say is that, in that case, the made-up things seem a good deal more important than the real ones. Suppose this black pit of a kingdom of yours is the only world. Well, it strikes me as a pretty poor one. And that's a funny thing, when you come to think of it. We're just babies making up a game, if you're right. But four babies playing a game can make a play-world which licks your real world hollow. That's why I'm going to stand by the play-world. I'm on Aslan's side even if there isn't any Aslan to lead it. I'm going to live as like a Narnian as I can even if there isn't any Narnia."

The Narnia Chronicles have been enjoyed by millions of children all over the world, whether they understand the Christian symbolism or are simply intrigued by Lewis's storytelling power. The Narnia books are exciting and well-plotted, and the characters are funny, wise, and believable. This rich fantasy world has become a domain enjoyed by young readers everywhere, regardless of their religious backgrounds.

LEWIS'S LEGACY

Lewis is remembered as a scholar and author of books on medieval literature, Christian faith, and science fiction. But it is as the creator of the Narnia Chronicles that he has won a place in the hearts of young readers. They have been a tremendous success from their first publication, and continue to be read by succeeding generations of young readers. Their warmth and inventive narrative have gained them loyal readers around the world.

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

Lewis began to correspond with Joy Davidson Gresham, an American poet, in 1950. Lewis and Joy first met in person in 1953, and they married in 1956, when Lewis was nearly 60 years old. The two enjoyed a few happy years until Joy died of cancer in 1960. They had no children together, but he was stepfather to her two sons, whom he cared for after her death. Lewis described his mourning for Joy in *A Grief Observed* (1961). After suffering for some months from heart and prostate problems, Lewis died on November 22, 1963.

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The Narnia Chronicles

The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, 1950
Prince Caspian: The Return to Narnia, 1951
The Voyage of the "Dawn Treader," 1952
The Silver Chair, 1953
The Horse and His Boy, 1954

The Magician's Nephew, 1955
The Last Battle, 1956

Non-Fiction for Children

Letters to Children, 1985

Adult Fiction

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Out of the Silent Planet, 1938
The Screwtape Letters, 1942
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That Hideous Strength: A Modern Fairy-Tale for Grown Ups, 1945
The Great Divorce: A Dream, 1945
Till We Have Faces: A Myth Retold, 1956

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Literary Criticism

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The Personal Heresy: A Controversy (with Eustace M. W. Tillyard), 1939

Rehabilitations and Other Essays, 1939
A Preface to "Paradise Lost": Being the Ballard Matthews Lectures, Delivered at University College, North Wales, 1941, 1942
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Gollancz Memorial Prize for Literature: 1937, for *The Allegory of Love*
Royal Society of Literature (United Kingdom): 1948
Carnegie Medal (British Library Association): 1956, for *The Last Battle*
Lewis Carroll Shelf Award: 1962, for *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*

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Time, Dec. 6, 1963, p.57
The Times (London), Nov. 25, 1963
Virginia Quarterly Review, Autumn 1996, p.619

ADDRESSES AND WORLD WIDE WEB ADDRESSES

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Fredrick L. McKissack 1939-
Patricia C. McKissack 1944-

American Writers of Fiction and Nonfiction Books for Children

Creators of Award-Winning Books that Celebrate African-American Life

BIRTH

Fred

Fredrick L. McKissack was born on August 12, 1939, in Nashville, Tennessee. His parents were Lewis Winter McKissack and Bessye (Fizer) McKissack. Fred McKissack comes from a family of architects and builders. His great-grandfather, Moses McKissack, founded his own company and became the first black architect to earn a license in Tennessee. His grandfather, one of the first African-American builders, was well known for designing doors. His father was also an architect. Fred had three brothers: Lewis Winter, Jr., Joel Martin, and Moses Andrew.

Pat

Patricia C. McKissack was born Patricia L'Ann Carwell in Smyrna, Tennessee, on August 9, 1944. Her parents were Robert Carwell, who worked in security in the criminal justice system, and Erma Carwell, who was a hospital receptionist. She had one brother, Nolan, and a sister, Sarah Frances.

YOUTH

Fred

Growing up in Nashville with his three brothers, Fred had a happy, noisy, and fun childhood. He loved playing basketball and softball, but he also loved science, math, and reading. Fred was a talented athlete, a good student, and a student leader. In high school, he earned the highest score of anyone in his school on the college entrance exam.

Pat

Pat lived in Nashville until she was about two, when the family moved to Kirkwood, Missouri, a suburb of St. Louis. They lived there until the summer that she turned ten, when her parents got divorced. Pat's mother, along with her brother and sister, moved back to Nashville to be near her mother's family. Pat stayed in St. Louis for a while with her father's parents, then went to Nashville to live with her mom. She would visit her dad in St. Louis each summer. Pat often talks about how hard her parents' divorce was for her. As she recalls, "Nobody really wanted to talk about divorce in those days. They whispered about it in hushed tones, so I had to define it my own way. I defined divorce to mean if my parents didn't love each other, then they didn't love me. I carried all my hurt and anger and frustration inside."

Both sets of Pat's grandparents—her mother's and her father's parents—knew each other; in fact, her two grandmothers were best friends who had known each other even before Pat's parents got together. "The two of them knew I was deeply hurt by the divorce and that I didn't understand any of it, so they surrounded me with love. . . . [I grew up] in the bosom of this loving family. They just spoiled me rotten, especially my maternal grandfather, who gave me plenty of attention." Her grandfather loved to tell stories, and Pat talks today about remembering his voice and manner of speaking when she's writing. He didn't know how to read, which he concealed from Pat by asking her to read to him. She always assumed he was just helping her learn, which boosted her confidence and encouraged her love of reading.

One of Pat's favorite activities was going to the Nashville Public Library. Unlike other public places around town, it wasn't segregated. "It was always open to blacks," she recalls, "and that said something about the library to me: here is a place where blacks are welcome, so it must be a wonderful place. I had a different feeling about it than I had about those institutions that locked us out. The library had sense enough to throw its doors open and invite us in, and I accepted the invitation."

While the library itself may have made her feel welcome, Pat didn't always feel that the books did. In fact, the world as shown in her books was as segregated as most institutions in the American South. Looking through picture books and children's novels, she couldn't find any black people. "I never saw myself in books," she says now with regret. "It was very difficult to find me in any of the books I was looking at—except nonfiction. So began my love of reading nonfiction for fun. . . . It's fun to me because it was one of the few places where I could find images that reflected me. . . . I could find biographies of people like Mary McLeod Bethune. And the poetry of Langston Hughes was available. I would even pick up the encyclopedia and go through it and look for black people. That's how hungry I was to find what we had done, too. But I couldn't find anything in the juvenile novels. I combed the shelves looking for them and could not find them." For McKissack, this lack of images of African-Americans in children's literature became very important to her. As a child, it had a profoundly negative impact on her self-image; later, it influenced her decision to become a writer.

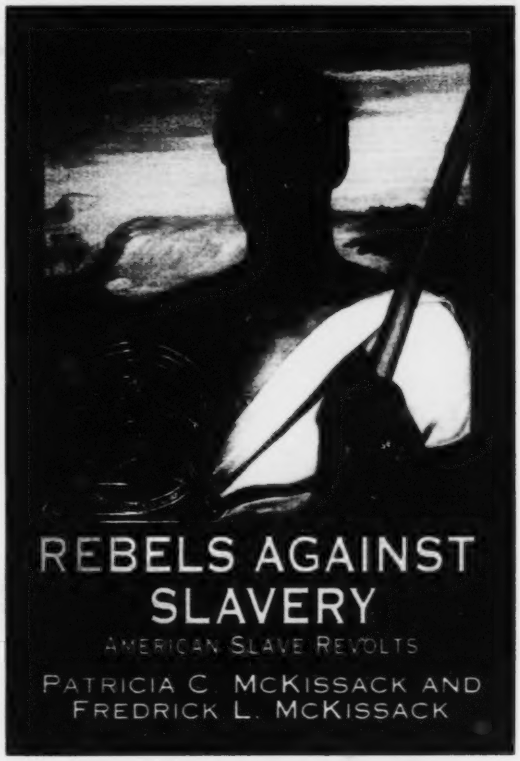
EDUCATION

Both Fred and Pat McKissack attended Pearl High School in Nashville. Fred graduated in 1957, several years before Pat finished in 1961. He went on to serve from 1957 to 1960 in the U.S. Marine Corps, where he repaired autopilots for airplanes. Both Fred and Pat attended Tennessee Agricultural and Industrial State University, now know as Tennessee State University. They both graduated in 1964. Fred earned a bachelor of science degree in civil engineering, and Pat earned a bachelor of arts degree in English and education. Pat later went on to earn her master's degree in 1975 at Webster University.

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

Fred and Pat grew up in the same town, so they had known each other from a distance for years before they met up again in college. Fred was five years older than Pat, though, so they weren't really friends when young. But because Fred spent several years in the Marine Corps before starting college, they graduated at the same time. They became engaged on their second date, and they were married just four months later. "All of our friends said it wouldn't last six months," Pat recalls. "They said it was ridiculous, and our families were concerned. But we just knew. We talked all the time and we still do. We have always had a very, very close relationship from the first date we had. We just had so much fun together that we knew."

Pat and Fred were married on December 12, 1964. In 1965 they moved to St. Louis, Missouri, where their three sons were born: Fredrick Jr., the eldest, and Robert and John, the twins.



THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

As African-Americans living in the South, the McKissacks were confronted by segregation and racism every day. Growing up in Nashville, they weren't allowed to go to the nicest hotels, concert halls, schools, restaurants, parks, or theaters. They rode in the back of the bus and used the rest rooms and drinking fountains marked "Colored." The 1960s, when the McKissacks were finishing college, getting married, and starting their professional lives, were a time of great hope for many around the country who were fighting for change with the Civil Rights Movement.

"[It] was a time of violent change, it really was," Fred says. "Life actually changed. In a sense we climbed from the Old South to the New South. We went from segregated schools to integrated situations." Pat also remembers how important those years were. "[We] were very idealistic. That was the period in which African-Americans were really looking up, coming out of darkness, segregation, and discrimination, and doors were beginning to open — ever so slightly, but still opening." Pat goes on to explain how that affected them. "I remember when Fred took me to dinner at Morrison's [Restaurant]. I was nervous as a flea because a sit-in had occurred only a few years earlier, and there had been people putting shotguns at young people's heads and saying, 'If you sit here we will blow you away.'" That had even happened to Fred when he participated in a sit-in at a Woolworth's store.

FIRST JOBS

After the McKissacks finished college and got married, they both started working in the St. Louis area in their chosen fields. Fred worked as a civil engineer for the government from 1964 to 1974. He then started his own general contracting business, which he owned and ran from 1974 until 1982, when he began collaborating with his wife on writing.

Meanwhile, Pat spent several years taking care of her young children before she started teaching. She taught eighth-grade English at the Nipher School in Kirkwood, Missouri, for seven years, from 1968 to 1975. In 1976, she went to work as a children's book editor for Concordia Publishing House, a religious publisher based in St. Louis, where she continued until 1981. It was during that time that Pat first started writing for publication. In 1978 her first book, *Good Shepherd Prayer,* written under the name L'Ann Carwell, was published by Concordia; she soon followed that up with two other religious titles as well. It was during that time, also, that she and Fred started talking about creating a writing partnership.

BECOMING WRITERS

Several different events together inspired the McKissacks to become a writing team. The first, really, dates back to Pat's earliest years as a reader, when she first started visiting the Nashville Public Library and felt so frustrated by the lack of books about people like her. "[Many] of the books I read as a child weren't honest. They marginalized or eliminated the contributions made by Africans and African-Americans, leaving me with a negative self-image and a distorted view of the world and the people who live in it," she recalls.

"At the time, I was like most children who believed that if they read something in a book it was true, and if something couldn't be found in a book then it wasn't important. After repeatedly looking for and not finding books that contained characters who were part of my culture, especially a girl with whom I could share an adventure and black historical figures whose lives I might report on in history classes, I made the erroneous assumption that *the reason African peoples weren't in books was because they hadn't done anything worthy of recognition."*

She goes on to say, "It took years to repair my damaged self-image. And that's why I started writing, because no child should have to endure such emotional pain. We must make sure materials for *all* emerging readers build self-esteem and pride in their heritage, validate all life, and above all, show them by example, that different is not a synonym for wrong."

Pat's experiences when she started teaching junior high school further strengthened these beliefs. Her eighth-grade students, she believed, were just developing their sense of self. At that age, they particularly needed to see

106

materials that reflected their lives. Yet Pat was disappointed by the lack of multicultural materials, so she began writing her own pieces to supplement the curriculum. She wanted to introduce her students to the famous poet Paul Laurence Dunbar. But his works weren't included in any of the standard anthologies—collections that were easily available to her students. So she decided to write a biography of Dunbar to share with her students, and then went on to write about Phillis Wheatley, James Weldon Johnson, and Countee Cullen as well.

Fred had reached the same conclusion about the existing literature. "We started writing particularly because the African-American story was not being told," he explains. "The African-American child was not seeing him- or herself in books, and [when you have] a chance to change this, then you stop and you do it. We're not talking about one child, we're not talking about ten, we're not talking about a thousand, we're talking about *millions* of children with literally no books in which they see themselves."

So in the early 1980s, Fred and Pat made a decision that would change their lives. At the time, Fred was working as a general contractor and Pat was working as a children's book editor at Concordia Publishing House, but they both felt like they were at a turning point in their lives. As Pat recalls here, "I remember that we were sitting in our car, just the two of us, and Fred said, 'If you could do anything you want to do in this whole wide world for the rest of your life, what would you do?' I said, 'Write books.' And he said 'Okay—let's do that. We'll take it as far as we can go. We'll take it day by day.'"

Pat went on to say, "The next step was to tell our children. 'We're going for a dream,' we said. 'Christmases are going to be pretty lean for a couple of years, and we're not going to have the vacations we once had, or have designer jeans or tennis shoes that cost a fortune. But we want you to know that we love you and need your support.' And the boys rallied around. They still do. I get teary when I think of all they've done for us—legwork, traveling, reading books, doing research."

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

Since the early 1980s, when the McKissacks began working together as a writing team, they have written over 70 books. Many document important people, historical events, and social customs of the African-American experience. These books span such a wide range—including picture books, easy readers, folk tales, religious works, biographies, and history—that they are difficult to categorize. Yet certain qualities characterize all their books. The McKissacks are known for their attention to factual detail and their painstaking and accurate research. Fred McKissack does most of this work. He searches for original sources, supplemented by scholarly works, to document all the details that go into their books—even down to the weather on any given day. They use their own extensive collection of reference materials, particularly on African-American topics, plus those in the public library. They also travel sometimes to pursue additional information. "We have to make sure the information is documented and researched," Pat explains. "We take great pride in the fact that we write as accurately as possible. We're going to make mistakes, but it won't be because of sloppiness. We try our best to document, to verify."

But factual detail alone would not satisfy many readers. The McKissacks are also known for using storytelling to engage and entertain their readers. "First to entertain," Pat says. "That's how you get people to listen in the first place." As Fred explains, "You've got to keep readers interested in order for them to read anything." So in all of their books, nonfiction and fiction alike, they pay great attention to the work's readability—using what they describe as "a story voice" to set the tone. They are also careful about their choice of subjects, searching for those that are of high interest. In this way, the McKissacks create books that entertain—but also inform and educate their readers.

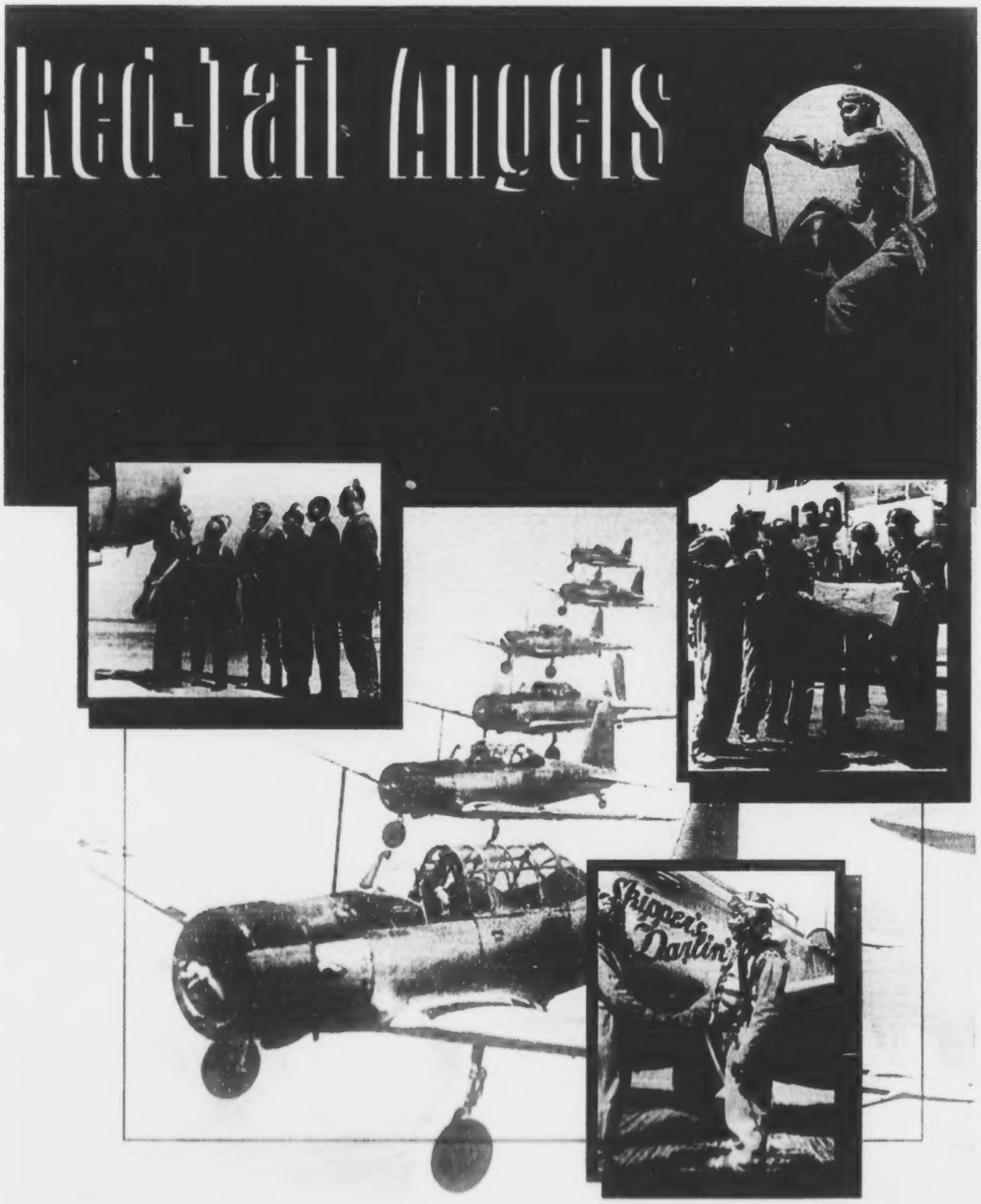
The McKissacks are often asked how they get ideas for their books. In describing their creative process, they say there are two basic ways that they develop story ideas. One is an instantaneous creation, when a fully formed story pops right out of their heads. They call that an Athena type of story, just as the Greek goddess Athena popped out of the head of Zeus. The other creative process they call a Mustard Seed type of story. In this, they have just a flicker of an idea, the size of a tiny mustard seed. The idea has to be nurtured before it will grow into a book.

Collaborating on Nonfiction

When the McKissacks are writing a nonfiction book, their process of collaboration works like this. Basically, Fred does the research, Pat does the writing, and then Fred does the editing. The McKissacks work in a three-room suite in a high-rise office building. They each have an office, plus a library to share. They're in and out of each other's rooms all day, asking questions and sharing ideas. When they start a nonfiction book, they begin by doing some preliminary reading on the topic, and then they compile an outline. Fred will continue with the research, while Pat starts writing the first draft. She types it up on a word processor, leaving blank spots for revising. Fred then reads it over and marks it up. They may go back and forth that way several times as they rework it.

The McKissacks have written a host of award-winning nonfiction titles. Many of these have been biographies of African-American heroes, including works on such luminaries as Paul Laurence Dunbar, Martin Luther King, Jr., Mary McLeod Bethune, Jesse Jackson, Frederick Douglass, James Weldon Johnson, W.E.B. DuBois, Louis Armstrong, Marian Anderson, Jesse Owens, Langston

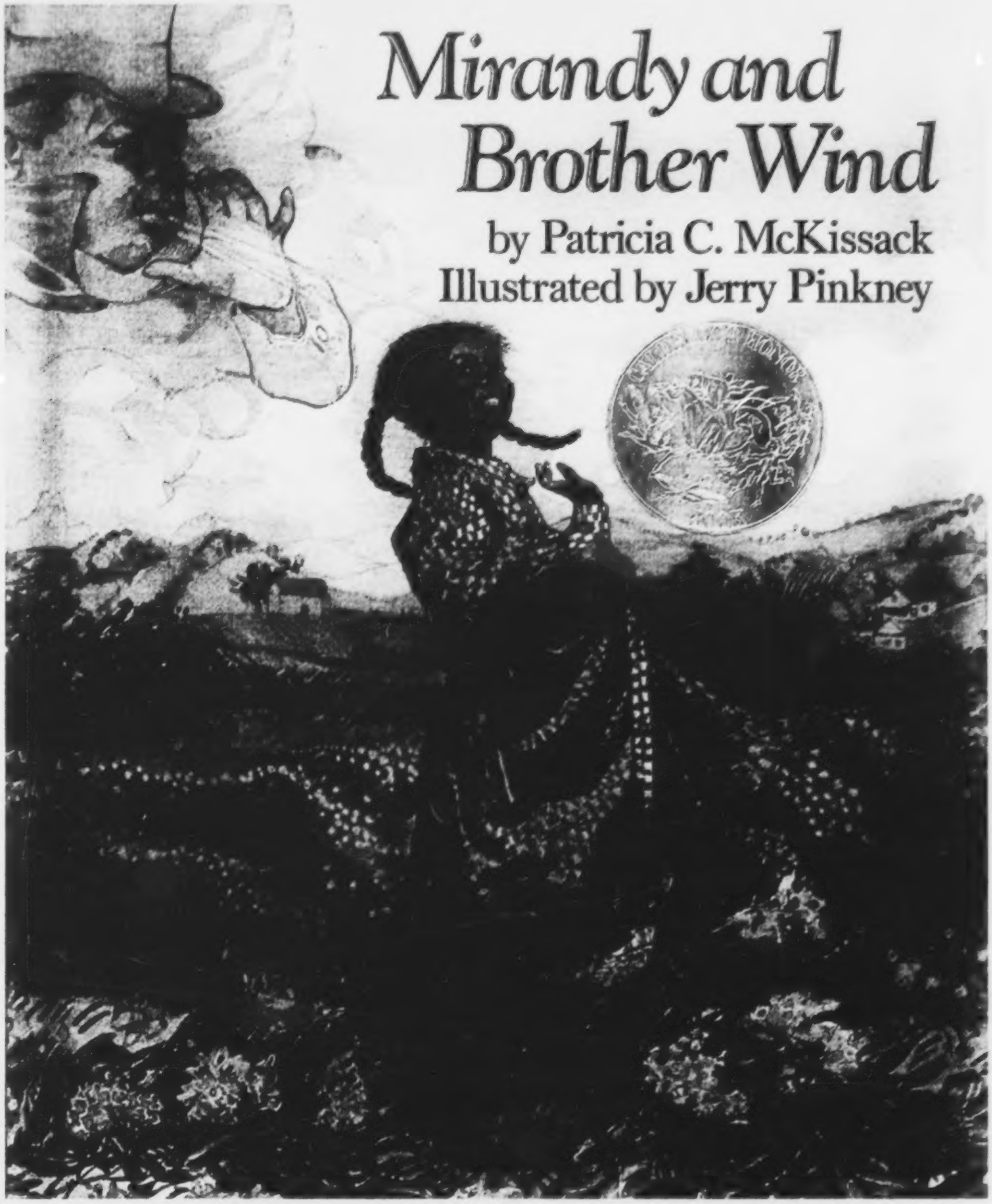
Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston, and Satchel Paige. While some of these have been published individually, many have been released as part of the People of Distinction Series put out by Childrens Press and the Great African-Americans Series put out by Enslow Publishers. One of the McKissacks' best titles is surely *Sojourner Truth: Ain't I a Woman?* (1992), a biography of the courageous abolitionist and activist for the rights of African-Americans and women. This book won the NAACP Image Award and the *Boston Globe/Horn Book* Award and was named an ALA Best Book for Young Adults, an ALA Notable Children's Book, and a Coretta Scott King Honor Book. The



McKissacks have also written two superb collections of short biographies, *African-American Scientists* and *African-American Inventors*. In a different vein, Pat recently wrote her own biography—*Can You Imagine?* (1997), a brief autobiography written for young readers in which she describes her early life and explains how she became a writer.

In addition to biographies, the McKissacks have created many other nonfiction works. Just a partial list of their histories, in particular, includes many of their best works. *The Civil Rights Movement in America from 1865 to the Present* (1987, revised 1991) is a thoroughly researched, lively, and heavily illustrated history that is widely used in middle and high schools throughout the United States. *A Long Hard Journey: The Story of the Pullman Porter* (1989) chronicles the struggle of African-American porters on the Pullman railroad cars. Exploited by managers, they fought to create the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, the first union for African-American workers to win concessions from a major corporation. *The Royal Kingdoms of Ghana, Mali, and Songhay: Life in Medieval Africa* (1994) describes the origins, customs, people, and political history of three major kingdoms in medieval Africa. Based on oral history, scholarly research, and folklore and legend, the book challenges old myths about "darkest" Africa being "civilized" by Europeans. *Black Diamond: The Story of the Negro Baseball Leagues* (1994), is a little bit different: Pat McKissack wrote it not with her husband but with her son, Fredrick McKissack, Jr. It tells the story of the Negro Leagues, when discrimination and segregation kept African-Americans out of major league baseball. It covers the second-rate, segregated conditions in which the players lived and played ball and tells the stories of the stars of the leagues.

After that, Pat and Fred Sr. returned to working together as a team on their next historical books. *Christmas in the Big House—Christmas in the Quarters* (1994) is a vivid description of a traditional Christmas on a Virginia plantation in 1859, just before the start of the Civil War. The book shows the holiday from two viewpoints: those in the Big House (the plantation owners) and those in the Quarters (the slaves). *Red-Tail Angels: The Story of the Tuskegee Airmen of World War II* (1995) tells the story of the only African-American pilots to fight in World War II. Their unit, the 99th Fighter Squadron, formed at a time when the U.S. armed services were completely segregated; African-Americans were not allowed to serve in the regular Air Force until 1948, three years after the end of World War II. When the 99th Fighter Squadron was formed, military leaders expected the recruits to prove that they were unfit to serve in the military. Instead, they earned a dazzling array of medals for bravery and the respect of all who had doubted them. Their recent title *Rebels against Slavery: American Slave Revolts* (1996) tells the story of the courageous men and women who led slave revolts in the United States and in the Caribbean islands.


Mirandy and Brother Wind
by Patricia C. McKissack
Illustrated by Jerry Pinkney

Writing Fiction

Although the McKissacks are full and equal collaborators when they write nonfiction, they use a different approach for writing fiction. While Fred may help edit the books, it is Pat who first develops the story ideas and does the writing. As she explains here, "When I'm writing fiction, I think the book through first. I walk around with a manuscript in my head for as long as a year — sometimes even longer — until I have very clearly in my mind a beginning, a middle, and an end. This doesn't mean that I won't change an ending or a setting or even a central character, but I can't work until I know where

I'm going." She continues, "I start with character. Then I create other characters, so there can be action. Next the story must have 'conflict,' something that will put tension in the story."

Pat McKissack has written a wide range of fiction for young readers, including original stories as well as adaptations of folk tales and fairy tales. The books that brought her widespread attention, and are still probably her best known, are her nostalgic picture books of the rural South, including *Flossie and the Fox* (1986), *Mirandy and Brother Wind* (1988), and *Nettie Jo's Friends* (1989). All three blend reality with fantasy and depict strong and resourceful female heroines. In addition, they feature lush illustrations and the culture, dialect, and colorful language of rural Southern African-Americans, drawn from Pat's memories of her grandfather's stories. Her most recent fiction title is *Ma Dear's Aprons* (1997), a picture book based on the life of her great- grandmother in rural Alabama in the early 1900s. In this simple story, Ma Dear is an African-American widow who does housecleaning and laundry to support her son, David Earl. The story is told from the viewpoint of young David Earl, who can always tell what day it is by the apron that Ma Dear wears.

The McKissacks have created a broad range of books about African-Americans, from simple picture books to sophisticated historical texts. Their varied works ensure that no black child will feel excluded from literature as they did when young. But despite their focus on African-American topics, the McKissacks don't want to be limited to that, as Pat explains here. "I'm not a black writer," she explains. "I'm a writer of books that children want to read. I happen to write books about something I care very much about — the African-American experience. But I don't write specifically for black children. I write for *all* children."

SELECTED WRITINGS

Writings by Patricia C. McKissack

Good Shepherd Prayer, 1978 (under name L'Ann Carwell)
God Gives New Life, 1979 (under name L'Ann Carwell)
Ask the Kids, 1979
Martin Luther King, Jr.: A Man to Remember, 1984
Paul Laurence Dunbar: A Poet to Remember, 1984
Michael Jackson Superstar, 1984
Lights Out, Christopher, 1984
It's the Truth, Christopher, 1984
The Apache, 1984
Aztec Indians, 1985
The Inca, 1985
The Maya, 1985

Flossie and the Fox, 1986
Mirandy and Brother Wind, 1988
Nettie Jo's Friends, 1989
Monkey-Monkey's Trick: Based on an African Folk-Tale, 1989
A Piece of the Wind and Other Stories to Tell, 1990 (with Ruthilde Kronberg)
A Million Fish—More or Less, 1992
The Dark Thirty: Southern Tales of the Supernatural, 1992
Black Diamond: the Story of the Negro Baseball Leagues, 1994 (with Fredrick McKissack, Jr.)
Can You Imagine? 1997
Ma Dear's Aprons, 1997

Writings by Patricia C. and Fredrick L. McKissack

Look What You've Done Now, Moses, 1984
Abram, Abram, Where Are We Going? 1984
Lights Out, Christopher, 1984
Cinderella, 1985
Country Mouse and City Mouse, 1985
The Little Red Hen, 1985
The Three Bears, 1985
When Do You Talk to God? Prayers for Small Children, 1986
Frederick Douglass: The Black Lion, 1987
The Civil Rights Movement in America from 1865 to the Present, 1987 (revised 1991)
Messy Bessey, 1987
The Big Bug Book of Counting, 1987
The Big Bug Book of Opposites, 1987
A Troll in a Hole, 1988
James Weldon Johnson: "Lift Every Voice and Sing," 1990
A Long Hard Journey: The Story of the Pullman Porter, 1990
Taking a Stand against Racism and Racial Discrimination, 1990
W.E.B. DuBois, 1990
The Story of Booker T. Washington, 1991
African Americans, 1991
Sojourner Truth: Ain't I a Woman? 1992
Mary McLeod Bethune, 1992
The Royal Kingdoms of Ghana, Mali, and Songhay: Life in Medieval Africa, 1993
African-American Scientists, 1994
African-American Inventors, 1994
Lorraine Hansberry: Dramatist and Activist, 1994

Christmas in the Big House, Christmas in the Quarters, 1994
Red-Tail Angels: The Story of the Tuskegee Airmen of World War II, 1995
Rebels against Slavery: American Slave Revolts, 1996

"Great African Americans" Series, by Patricia C. and Fredrick L. McKissack

Carter G. Woodsen: The Father of Black History, 1991
Frederick Douglass: Leader against Slavery, 1991
George Washington Carver: The Peanut Scientist, 1991
Ida B. Wells-Burnett: A Voice against Violence, 1991
Louis Armstrong: Jazz Musician, 1991
Martin Luther King, Jr.: Man of Peace, 1991
Mary Church Terrell: Leader for Equality, 1991
Mary McLeod Bethune: A Great Teacher, 1991
Marian Anderson: A Great Singer, 1991
Ralph J. Bunche: Peacemaker, 1991
Jesse Owens: Olympic Star, 1992
Langston Hughes: Great American Poet, 1992
Zora Neale Hurston: Writer and Storyteller, 1992
Satchel Paige: The Best Arm in Baseball, 1992
Madam C.J. Walker: Self-Made Millionaire, 1992
Booker T. Washington: Leader and Educator, 1992
Paul Robeson: A Voice to Remember, 1992

HONORS AND AWARDS

For Patricia C. McKissack

Helen Keating Ott Award (National Church and Synagogue Librarians Association): 1980, for editorial work at Concordia Publishing House
C.S. Lewis Silver Medal Award (Christian Educators Association): 1984, for *It's the Truth, Christopher*; 1984, for *Lights Out, Christopher*
Notable Children's Book (American Library Association): 1989, for *Mirandy and Brother Wind*
Parent's Choice Award: 1990, for *Nettie Jo's Friends*
Coretta Scott King Author Award (American Library Association): 1993, for *The Dark-Thirty: Southern Tales of the Supernatural*; 1995, for *Black Diamond: The Story of the Negro Baseball Leagues* (with Fredrick McKissack, Jr.)

For Patricia C. and Fredrick L. McKissack

C.S. Lewis Silver Medal Award (Christian Educators Association): 1985, for *Abram, Abram, Where Are We Going?*

Coretta Scott King Author Award (American Library Association): 1990, for *A Long Hard Journey: The Story of the Pullman Porter*; 1995, for *Christmas in the Big House, Christmas in the Quarters*

Jane Addams Peace Award (Women's International League for Peace and Freedom): 1990, for *A Long Hard Journey: The Story of the Pullman Porter*

Notable Children's Book (American Library Association): 1993, for *Sojourner Truth: Ain't I a Woman?*

Best Book for Young Adults (American Library Association): 1993, for *Sojourner Truth: Ain't I a Woman?*

Boston Globe/Horn Book Award for Nonfiction: 1993, for *Sojourner Truth: Ain't I a Woman?*

NAACP Image Award for Children's Literature (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People): 1994, for *Sojourner Truth: Ain't I a Woman?*

FURTHER READING

Books

Contemporary Authors New Revision Series, Vols. 38 and 49

Manna, Anthony L. and Carolyn S. Brodie. *Many Faces, Many Voices: Multicultural Literary Experiences for Youth*, 1992

McElmeel, Sharron L. *Bookpeople: A Multicultural Album*, 1992

McKissack, Patricia. *Can You Imagine?* 1997

Rollock, Barbara. *Black Authors & Illustrators of Children's Books*, 1992

Something about the Author, Vol. 73

Who's Who in America, 1996

Periodicals

CMLEA (California Media and Library Educators Association) Journal, Fall 1993, p.29

Horn Book, Jan.-Feb. 1994, p.53

Language Arts, Jan. 1992, p.69

Teaching K-8, May 1993, p.36

ADDRESS

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Katherine Paterson 1932-

American Writer for Children and Young Adults
Author of *The Master Puppeteer, Bridge to Terabithia, The Great Gilly Hopkins,* and *Jacob Have I Loved*

BIRTH

Katherine Clements Womeldorf (later Katherine Paterson) was born on October 31, 1932, in Qing Jiang, in China's Jiangsu Province. Her parents, George Raymond Womeldorf and Mary Elizabeth (Goetchius) Womeldorf, were Presbyterian missionaries from Virginia. Katherine was the third of their five children. She has a brother, Raymond, called Sonny, and two sisters, Helen and Elizabeth. An infant brother, Charles, died a few weeks after his birth.

YOUTH

Until she was five, Katherine and her family lived in the city of Hwaian, China. But when war broke out between China and Japan in 1938, the Womeldorfs were forced to return to the U.S. They spent a year living in Lynchburg and Richmond, Virginia. Katherine hated America, which was totally foreign to her, and she was happy to return to China a year later. Although her father was able to get back to their home in Hwaian to continue his missionary work, the rest of the family stayed in the British section of Shanghai, where Katherine quickly forgot the Chinese she had learned and started speaking English. Then World War II broke out, and the Womeldorfs were forced to flee the country permanently. They arrived back in the U.S. when Katherine was nine.

The Womeldorfs moved frequently, living in 15 different houses in Virginia, North Carolina, and West Virginia over the next 13 years. Wherever they lived, Katherine felt like an outsider. Because of her unconventional upbringing, she didn't look, talk, or act like other children her age. Her peers often made fun of her, and adults regarded her as "a weird little kid" who had trouble fitting in

EARLY MEMORIES

Paterson's most vivid childhood memory reflects her status as a perpetual outsider. When she was a first grader living in Richmond, Virginia, she came home from school on February 14 without a single Valentine. "My mother grieved over this event until her death," Paterson recalls, "asking me once why I didn't write a story about the time I didn't get any Valentines. 'But Mother,' I said, '*all* my stories are about the time I didn't get any Valentines!"

EDUCATION

When she arrived in the U.S. for the second time, Paterson entered the Calvin H. Wiley School in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Small for her age and very timid, she spoke with a strange accent from her time in British Shanghai and dressed in clothes that had been donated by members of her father's church. At that point during World War II, many Americans were very fearful of foreigners. Since she'd come from someplace very far away, her classmates called her "Jap" because they thought she might be a Japanese spy. Paterson worked so hard to lose her British accent that she speaks with a North Carolina accent to this day, even though she has lived in a number of different states and one foreign country since that time.

What saved her sanity during that difficult time, Paterson says, was her volunteer job as a school library aide. She helped shelve books and read stories to the younger students. The librarian even allowed her to mend books, a "loving, caring task" she remembers clearly. "I have never taken more pride in any job I have held than I took in being a library aide at Calvin H. Wiley School," Paterson declares. In 1950, she graduated from high school in Charles Town, West Virginia.

The family's frequent moves while Paterson was growing up took her to 13 different schools by the time she had graduated from college. She majored in English literature at King College, a small, Presbyterian college in Bristol, Tennessee, from which she graduated summa cum laude in 1954. After teaching sixth grade in Lovettsville Virginia, for a year, she enrolled in the Presbyterian School of Christian Education in Richmond, Virginia, where she got her first master's degree, in 1957.

Paterson wanted to go back to China, but a close woman friend who was Japanese suggested that Katherine go to Japan instead. She was reluctant at first, remembering the Japanese soldiers who had stormed the beach behind her family's summer house in China. They wore only loincloths and carried bayonets, and their war cries had terrified Katherine and her younger sister. But she ended up taking her friend's advice and lived in Japan for four years, from 1957 to 1961. She studied the language and worked as a Christian Education Assistant for 11 pastors on Shikoku Island, while doing post-graduate work at the Naganuma School of Japanese Language in Kobe. During her stay she completely overcame her childhood hatred of the Japanese and learned to love their country so much that she had a difficult time readjusting when she returned to her family's home in Virginia. Every night for several weeks, she got out of bed and lay on the floor, where she had grown accustomed to sleeping while living in Japan.

After returning from Japan in 1961, Paterson earned a second master's degree in religious education from Union Theological Seminary in New York City, graduating in 1962. After graduation from Union, she taught Sacred Studies and English at the Pennington School for Boys in New Jersey for a couple of years. She also worked briefly as a substitute teacher, which she describes as "the worst job I ever had."

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

Katherine met John Barstow Paterson, a Presbyterian minister, when she was studying at Union Theological Seminary. They were married on July 14, 1962, and settled in Takoma Park, Maryland, where John served as pastor of the Takoma Park Presbyterian Church for the next 13 years. During this time the Patersons had two sons, John Jr. and David, and adopted two daughters. Their oldest daughter, Elizabeth PoLin (Chinese for "precious life") was born in Hong Kong in 1962 and arrived in their home in 1964, just six months after John Jr. was born. David was born in 1966, and two years later they adopted

Mary Katherine Nah-he-sah-pe-che-a (Apache for "a young Apache lady"), a five-month-old Native American girl who was born on an Apache reservation in Arizona.

The Patersons have also served as temporary foster parents for two Cambodian children—an experience that later inspired one of Katherine's best-known books, *The Great Gilly Hopkins.*

BECOMING A WRITER

Paterson's career as a writer began in 1964 when she was pregnant with her first son and awaiting the arrival of her first daughter from the orphanage in Hong Kong. She accepted an assignment to write religious education curriculum materials. When the job was finished, she decided to try her hand at fiction. By the fall of 1968 she had four young children to raise and found herself writing in "ten-minute cracks of time." But the desire to create something that wasn't "eaten up, dirtied, or torn apart" by the end of the day kept her going. And having spent so much of her life as an outsider, she discovered that she had a gift for creating characters who, like herself, didn't fit in.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

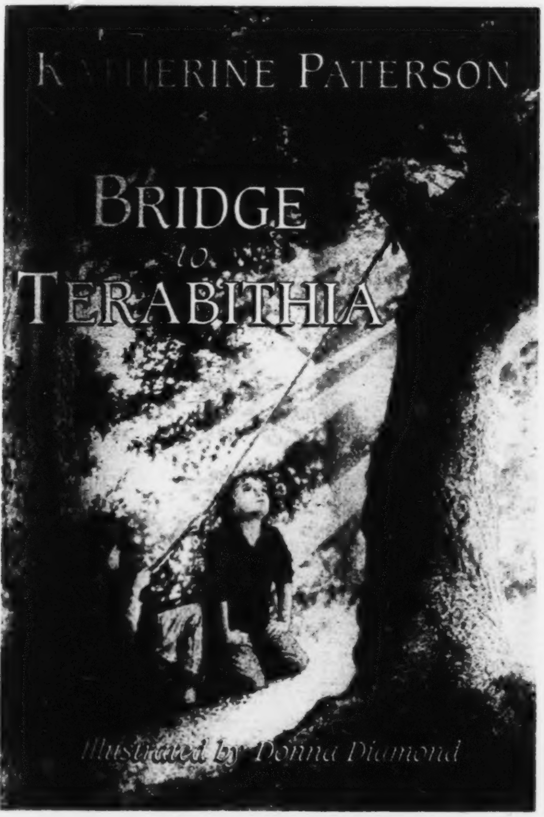
Paterson was over 40 and had been writing fiction for nine years when she published her first book for young adults, *The Sign of the Chrysanthemum.* Set in medieval Japan, it tells the story of a young orphan's search for his samurai (warrior) father. Paterson produced a chapter of the book every week for an adult education course she was taking at the time. When it was finished, she sent the manuscript to Thomas Y. Crowell, a New York publisher. An editorial reader picked it out of the "slush pile"—the group of unsolicited manuscripts aspiring writers send to publishers—and it was published in 1973.

Paterson wrote two more novels that drew on her knowledge of Japanese culture and history. *Of Nightingales that Weep* (1974) was written in response to a friend's request that she produce a novel about a young girl who is very strong and manages to overcome many odds. Takiko, the book's main character, is not only strong, but selfish and vain. When her widowed mother marries Goro, a potter and distant relative, Takiko moves to Goro's farm. She rejects him as a father because he is physically deformed and reminds her of a monkey, but eventually she gets so lonely that she starts playing an old koto (a Japanese stringed instrument) that belonged to Goro's mother. The music gradually heals and strengthens her, and she learns to recognize and accept Goro's love.

The third of Paterson's "Japanese" novels was *The Master Puppeteer* (1976). Set in the late 18th century during the famine in Osaka, the book was inspired by an advertisement Paterson saw in the *Washington Post* about a Japanese puppet theater that was going to perform at the Kennedy Center. The puppet theater became a backdrop for a mystery story involving a Robin Hood-type bandit and a puppeteer's apprentice named Jiro. Although the novel was set in a very distant time and place, many of its themes—the conflict between the upper and lower classes, the rights of the poor, and young people's obligation to conform to their parents' values—were similar to those faced by young people living in America. *The Master Puppeteer* won the National Book Award for children's literature in 1977.

Bridge to Terabithia

At the age of 41, with her first novel published and her second book about to come out, Katherine Paterson discovered that she had cancer. She had an operation to remove a cancerous tumor. It was successful and her prognosis was good. But just as she was getting back on her feet, her son David's best friend was struck and killed by lightning. The tragedy had a profound impact on Paterson. She started writing another book to help her deal with her son's grief, only to discover that she couldn't seem to get past the part of the story where the fictional child dies. When a friend remarked that perhaps it was her own death that she was afraid of, Paterson decided that she had to confront her own mortality and get on with the novel.



The Bridge to Terabithia (1977) tells the story of the friendship between Jess and Leslie, two "outsiders" from very different backgrounds who create a secret place called Terabithia, located on the other side of a creek that they can only cross by swinging on a rope tied to an apple tree. When Leslie attempts to reach Terabithia during a severe storm while Jess is off on a trip to Washington, the rope breaks and she is killed when she hits her head on a stone. Although at first he is overcome by guilt and grief, Jess eventually learns to accept what has happened and to share his secret world with his younger sister.

The Bridge to Terabithia won Katherine Paterson her first Newbery Award. Although it was set in rural America instead of Japan, this book again told the story of two children who don't fit in with their peers. The critics praised Paterson for creating such a realistic girl-boy friendship, and young adult readers all over America eagerly anticipated her next novel.

The Great Gilly Hopkins

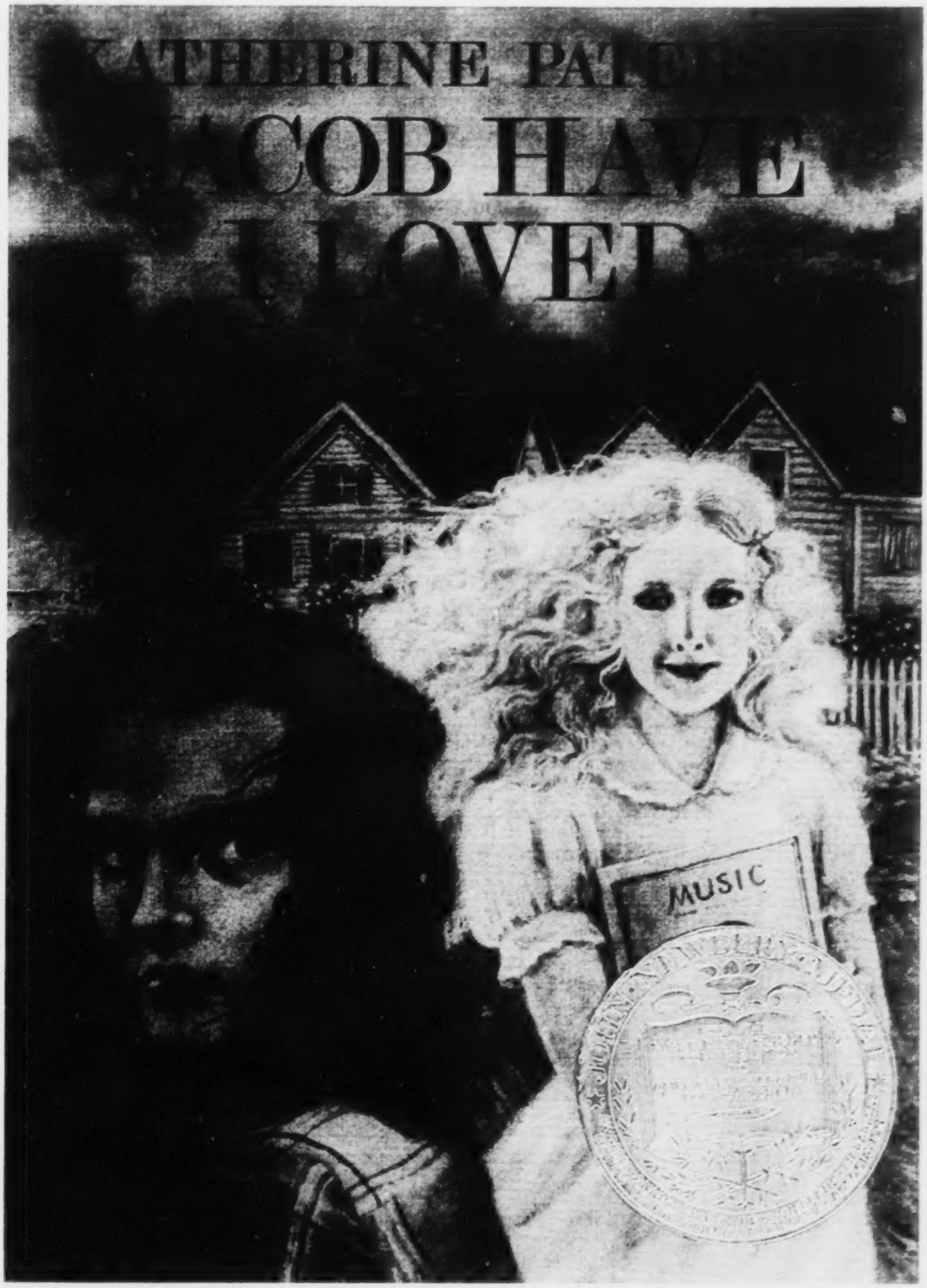
Inspired by her own experience as a temporary foster mother, Paterson created *The Great Gilly Hopkins* (1978). Gilly Hopkins is a precocious, outspoken girl who maneuvers her way through a series of foster homes. She manages to keep everyone at arm's length, until the novel's most unlikely character—Maime Trotter, an illiterate, overweight foster mother—finally wins her love. Paterson called *The Great Gilly Hopkins* a "confession" of her own failure to deal with the problems and frustrations she felt in caring for two Cambodian children who had been placed in her home for foster care.

The Great Gilly Hopkins struck a real chord with Paterson's young readers. "This book is a miracle," one of them said. "Mrs. Paterson knows exactly how children feel." She received her second National Book Award, and *The Great Gilly Hopkins* went on to become a television special.

Jacob Have I Loved and After

Paterson took the title of her next novel, *Jacob Have I Loved* (1980), from the biblical story of Jacob and Esau. Jacob and Esau are twins, and in the bible, God prefers Jacob over Esau, saying "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." The novel is about an adolescent girl, Sara Louise ("Wheeze") Bradshaw, who is consumed by jealousy of her twin sister, Caroline. Caroline's beauty and musical talent constantly put her in the limelight, while Wheeze sees herself as an ugly duckling who must struggle to overcome her low self-esteem. The story is set on Rass Island in the Chesapeake Bay, and many readers found its strong sense of place to be one of the story's most compelling characteristics. It is one of her best-known books, and it won Paterson a second Newbery Award.

By the time *Jacob* was published in 1980, Paterson and her husband had moved to Norfolk, Virginia, where she continued to produce award-winning books for children and young adults. *Rebels of the Heavenly Kingdom* (1983), set in mid-19th century China, is based on the 1850-53 revolt of the Taiping Tienko (Heavenly Kingdom of Great Peace) against the country's corrupt Manchu rulers. *Come Sing, Jimmy Jo* (1985) is a fantasy story about a young mountain boy who becomes a country music star. *Park's Quest* (1988), which grew out of Paterson's friendship with a family whose eldest son had died in the Vietnam War, is about the son of a pilot killed in Vietnam who goes to


KATHERINE PATERSON
JACOB HAVE I LOVED
MUSIC
JOHN NEWBERY MEDAL

visit his father's family in rural Virginia. By the time she had finished this book, Paterson's children were grown and she and her husband had moved to Vermont. *Jip: His Story* (1996), her most recent novel, is about a young boy in the 1800s who is abandoned near a small Eastern town and must search for his true identity.

In much of her young adult fiction, Paterson focuses on young people who are left to their own resources and must learn how to survive in a world that is not always kind. She is widely admired for her realistic characters, believable settings, and convincing dialogue. Although she has been criticized for writing novels that don't end happily, Paterson strongly believes that her stories take on a life of their own, and that they end in a way that is both right and inevitable.

Christian beliefs pervade Paterson's work, but her books are seldom described as "religious." Perhaps it is her background as the child of missionaries that enables her to identify with children who are orphaned, abandoned, or estranged from the people around them. Paterson says that she is drawn to such characters because "I have within myself a lonely, frightened child who keeps demanding my comfort." She prides herself not only on being true to the child's point of view but on presenting the world as a complicated, often frightening, place.

ADVICE TO YOUNG WRITERS

Although she would not necessarily recommend the frequent moves and social isolation of her own childhood as the ideal preparation for being a writer in later life, Paterson does believe that being a "weird little kid" can be an advantage. "I'm sure there are plenty of fine writers who have overcome the disadvantages of a normal childhood and have gone on to do great things," she once said. "It's just that we weird little kids do seem to have a head start."

MAJOR INFLUENCES

Paterson believes that her writing has been influenced by three things: her experiences in China and Japan, her adolescence in the American South, and her strong Christian heritage. She also credits her four children with having a profound influence on her writing and with supplying much of the source material for her books.

FAVORITE BOOKS

When she was growing up, Katherine Paterson particularly loved three books: Frances Hodgson Burnett's *The Secret Garden,* Marjorie Rawlings' *The Yearling,* and Alan Paton's *Cry, the Beloved Country.* She says that these books forced her to confront the "agonizing truth" about the world she lived in, but that they also left her better prepared to cope with life.

WRITINGS

For Young Adults

The Sign of the Chrysanthemum, 1973
Of Nightingales that Weep, 1974
The Master Puppeteer, 1976
Bridge to Terabithia, 1977
The Great Gilly Hopkins, 1978
Jacob Have I Loved, 1980
Rebels of the Heavenly Kingdom, 1983
Come Sing, Jimmy Jo, 1985
Consider the Lilies: Plants of the Bible (with John Paterson), 1986
Park's Quest, 1988
Lyddie, 1991
A Midnight Clear: Twelve Family Stories for the Christmas Season, 1995
Jip: His Story, 1996

For Children

Angels and Other Strangers: Family Christmas Stories, 1979
The Smallest Cow in the World, 1988
The Tale of the Mandarin Ducks, 1990
The King's Equal, 1992
Flip-Flop Girl, 1994
The Angel and the Donkey, 1996
Marvin's Best Christmas Present Ever, 1997

Other Books

Who Am I? 1966
Justice for All People, 1973
To Make Men Free, 1973
Gates of Excellence: On Reading and Writing for Children, 1981
The Spying Heart: More Thoughts on Reading and Writing Books for Children, 1989
A Sense of Wonder: On Reading and Writing Books for Children, 1995

HONORS AND AWARDS

Notable Children's Book Award (American Library Association): 1974, for *Of Nightingales that Weep;* 1976, for *The Master Puppeteer;* 1977, for *Bridge to Terabithia;* 1978, for *The Great Gilly Hopkins;* 1980, for *Jacob Have I Loved;* 1985, for *Come Sing, Jimmy Jo*

National Book Award for Children's Literature: 1977, for *The Master Puppeteer;* 1970, for *The Great Gilly Hopkins*
Edgar Allan Poe Special Award (Mystery Writers of America): 1977, for *The Master Puppeteer*
John Newbery Medal (American Library Association): 1978, for *Bridge to Terabithia;* 1981, for *Jacob Have I Loved*
Lewis Carroll Shelf Award: 1978, for *Bridge to Terabithia*
Christopher Award: 1978, for *The Great Gilly Hopkins*
William Allen White Children's Book Award (William Allen White Library at Emporia State University): 1981, for *The Great Gilly Hopkins*
New England Book Award (New England Booksellers Association): 1982
Parent's Choice Award (Parent's Choice Foundation): 1983, for *Rebels of the Heavenly Kingdom*
Irving Kerlan Award: 1983, for attainments in the creation of children's literature
Silver Medallion (University of Southern Mississippi School of Library Service): 1983, for outstanding contributions to the field of children's literature
Adolescent Literature Assembly Award (National Council of Teachers of English): 1987, for contribution to young adult literature
Regina Medal Award (Catholic Library Association): 1988
Boston Globe-Horn Book Award: 1991, for *The Tale of the Mandarin Ducks*
Union Medal (Union Theological Seminary): 1992

FURTHER READING

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Berger, Laura Standley, ed. *Twentieth Century Young Adult Writers,* 1994
Cary, Alice. *Katherine Paterson,* 1997 (juvenile)
Contemporary Authors New Revision Series, Vol. 28
Dictionary of Literary Biography, Vol. 52
Gallo, Donald R., ed. *Speaking for Ourselves: Autobiographical Sketches by Notable Authors of Books for Young Adults,* 1990
Silvey, Anita, ed. *Children's Books and Their Creators,* 1995
Something About the Author, Vol. 53

Periodicals

Columbus Dispatch, Feb. 4, 1989, p.B10
Entertainment Weekly, May 1, 1992, p.64
Language Arts, Feb. 1981, p.189

National Catholic Reporter, Feb. 2, 1990, p.21
New York Times Book Review, Apr. 26, 1981, p.52
Publishers Weekly, July 17, 1995, p.138

ADDRESS

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New York, NY 10016

Anne Rice 1941-

American Gothic Novelist
Author of "The Vampire Chronicles"

BIRTH

Anne Rice was born in New Orleans, Louisiana, on October 4, 1941. Her father, Howard O'Brien, was a postal worker who sculpted and wrote fiction in his spare time. Her mother, Katherine (Allen) O'Brien, was both a strict Roman Catholic and a gifted teller of ghost stories who had once pursued a career in the Hollywood film industry. Anne is the second of their four girls. Her older sister is named Alice, and her younger sisters are Karen and Tamara.

Anne's parents originally named her Howard Allen O'Brien because they thought it would be a great idea to name a girl after her father. But when she said she wanted to change her name to Anne in the first grade, they didn't try to talk her out of it.

YOUTH

The O'Brien girls grew up in the "Irish Channel" section of New Orleans, a working class Catholic neighborhood located just a few blocks away from the mansion-filled Garden District. Living so close to this old-money neighborhood, Rice and her sisters always felt like outsiders, and they developed a reputation for being "weird." They loved to play in the city's cemeteries, where people were buried above ground and bones often poked through the surface of the graves. While other children were outside playing games, young Anne O'Brien could often be found reading stories about haunted houses in the public library or watching horror movies. "My sisters and I grew up like the Brontë sisters," Rice says. "We had complete fantasy worlds with ongoing characters."

Katherine O'Brien entertained her daughters by making up stories about supernatural events. Anne vividly recalls her mother's talent for storytelling. "I remember walking past a beautiful house on St. Charles Avenue, and my mother told me that this ghastly thing had happened there. One day the lady of the house had been sitting and brushing her long hair, and the hair just burst into flames. My mother could tell stories like that better than anyone else I've ever heard," Rice says.

When Anne was growing up, her mother was an alcoholic. Katherine O'Brien often drank until she passed out. Rice recalls the horror of those years: "I remember thinking, 'What I would give, for just one day, to feel like everybody else.'" Katherine O'Brien died from alcoholism when Anne was only 14. At that time alcoholism was considered a sin in the Catholic Church, which contributed to Anne's feelings of disillusionment with religion. Over the next few years, she says, "My faith just went."

Anne's father remarried in 1957 and moved the family to Richardson, Texas. The transition was very tough. "When we left [New Orleans], the city was out of touch; it was like a Caribbean outpost. Going from there to Texas was like stepping through TV to the world of America we had seen from afar. But that was a wonderful thing for me as a writer, to grow up in this foreign city and then discover America at age 15." In Texas, Anne maintained her reputation as a "weirdo" by hanging out with a group of nonconformist friends.

EDUCATION

Anne attended a Catholic elementary school in New Orleans called the Holy Name of Jesus, where the nuns were suspicious of her intense interest in the occult. As a fifth grader, she filled a notebook with her first story, about two kids from Mars who commit suicide. After the family moved to Texas, Anne attended Richardson High School, where she was the features editor for the school newspaper. The editor was Stan Rice, who was a year behind her in school but would one day become her husband. She graduated from Richardson High School in about 1959.

After high school, Rice first attended Texas Women's University in Denton and then transferred briefly to North Texas State University, where Stan Rice was studying. During this period she continued to question many of the traditional religious beliefs and values she had held since she was a child. She eventually decided that she didn't believe in God and turned her back on the Catholic Church altogether.

Anne and Stan married in 1961 and moved to San Francisco a year later, where they enrolled in San Francisco State College (later San Francisco State University). Anne majored in political science. But by the time she graduated with a B.A. in 1964, her main interests were literature and creative writing. Throughout the years during and just after college Anne held a variety of jobs. She worked as a waitress, a cook, a theater usher, and an insurance claims examiner. In 1966 she had her first child, Michele.

During the late 1960s she kept busy with work and motherhood. At about the same time, she developed an obsession with learning more about her Louisiana roots. She went to the library at the University of California at Berkeley and read everything she could find about the state's history and literary traditions. She also started writing a story about a vampire living in 18th-century New Orleans. But at this point the hero of her story, a vampire named Louis, was little more than a cartoon character who dressed in black and wore a cape. In addition to doing research and writing, Rice returned to school in 1969 to study literary criticism at the University of California at Berkeley. A year later, she transferred to San Francisco State, where she completed her M.A. in creative writing in 1971.

A FAMILY TRAGEDY

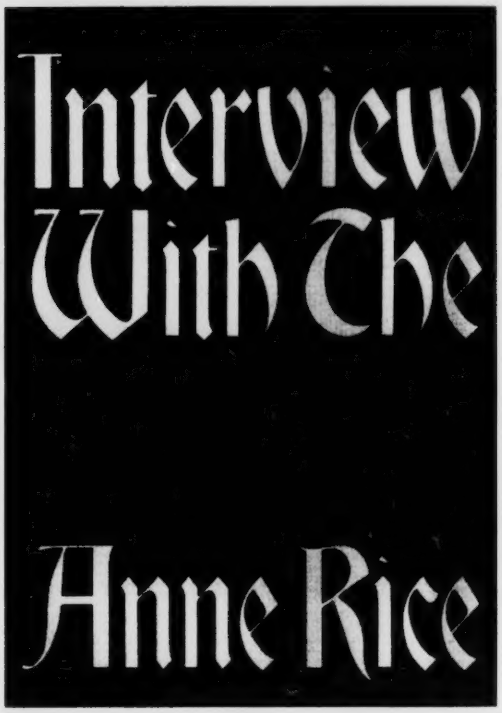
One night Anne dreamed that there was something wrong with her daughter's blood. Several months later, Michele was diagnosed with a rare form of leukemia. She died in 1972, shortly before her sixth birthday. "It was a nightmare," Anne says. She and Stan both started drinking heavily after Michele's death, trying to drown their grief.

The Rices continued drinking heavily over the next few years, while Anne was getting started as a writer. Then in 1978 they had a second child, Christopher. Anne quit drinking while she was pregnant, and then took it up again as soon as he was born. When Chris was one year old, Anne decided that she didn't want her son to grow up as the child of alcoholic parents. "My husband and I just quit, cold turkey, one day. I didn't want my son to have drunks for parents, I didn't want him to grow up with a drunken mother like I did." Anne and Stan stopped drinking in 1979 and have remained sober ever since.

BECOMING A WRITER

After her daughter's death in 1972, Rice threw herself into her writing. Consumed by grief over the loss of her child, she started to identify with the fictional character Louis, who feels responsible for the death of his brother. "Suddenly, in the guise of Louis, a fantasy figure, I was able to touch the reality that was mine," Rice recalls. "It had something to do with growing up in New Orleans. . . . It had something to do with my old-guard Catholic background. It had something to do with the tragic loss of my daughter and with the death of my mother when I was 14." She incorporated a character named Claudia into the story—a five-year-old girl who receives the gift of eternal life when she is transformed into a vampire. But it never occurred to Rice that the character Claudia was really her daughter Michele.

Rice spent five weeks writing in what she describes as "a white heat" between the hours of 10 p.m. and dawn. What started out as a short story ended up as a 400-page novel. She spent two years trying to find a publisher for it. Then Knopf, the prestigious New York publishing house, bought the novel because they found the story so unusual and compelling. All of Rice's hard work was about to pay off.


Interview
With The
Anne Rice

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

"The Vampire Chronicles"

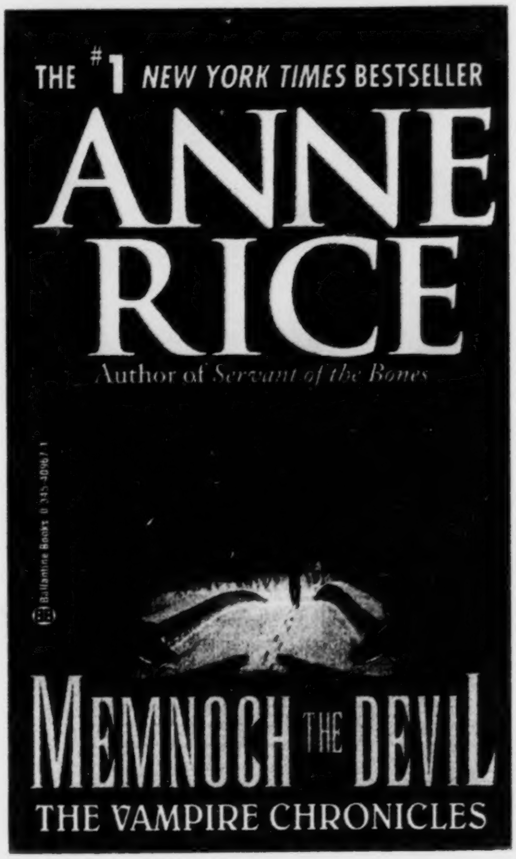
Interview with the Vampire (1976) recounts the life story of Louis, a former wealthy plantation owner who is initiated into the world of the undead by a vampire named Lestat. But unlike Lestat, Louis broods constantly over the choices he has made in his life and wonders whether he is evil. He finds companionship, finally, in the child-vampire Claudia. Eventually they go to Paris to find others like them. But he never overcomes his loneliness and self-doubt. Louis is a vampire with a conscience.

Initially, reviews of the novel were rare and rather cool. While some praised its originality and gripping plot, many disparaged its overblown style and superficial treatment of important themes. For a while, Rice was disillusioned enough to leave her vampire stories behind and try her hand at other types of fiction. But gradually the novel's popularity grew by word of mouth, and *Interview with the Vampire* became a success. It attracted the attention of Ballantine Books and Paramount Pictures, who bought the paperback and movie rights for $700,000 and $150,000, respectively. By the early 1980s, *Interview with the Vampire* had attracted a cult following, and Anne Rice was well on her way to becoming America's most famous Gothic novelist.

After *Interview with the Vampire* was published, Rice became more interested in exploring the character of Lestat, who continued to grow and change in her imagination. By the early 1980s he had become a more tragic figure in her mind, someone who knew right from wrong but also knew that he could never control his need to kill. In her next vampire novel, *The Vampire Lestat* (1985), Rice decided to tell Lestat's story, from his beginnings as a vampire in 18th-century Paris to the time when he reinvents himself as a rock star in the 1980s. It deals with some of the same themes as *Interview with the Vampire*: the search for meaning and the alienation of the individual.

The Vampire Lestat was the second installment in the series of books that became known as "The Vampire Chronicles." It made the *New York Times* best-seller list within two weeks of its publication and revived sales of Rice's first novel. When the publication of *The Queen of the Damned*, the third book in the series, was announced in 1988, it leapt to Number One on the best-seller list even before its official publication date, and it stayed there for 17 weeks. Unlike the first two novels, *The Queen of the Damned* continues the story of Lestat but also tells the story of the past, present, and future of the vampire kingdom. It includes the story of Queen Akasha, the ruler of all vampires and the queen of the damned, who wants to bring peace to the world by killing off most of the men and creating a kingdom of women.

The fourth part of "The Vampire Chronicles" was *Tale of the Body Thief*, published in 1992. Here, Rice introduced Raglan James, a powerful mortal character who is a vampire hunter. In this novel, Rice made Lestat even more human by giving him an opportunity to exchange bodies with a mortal for 48 hours. Lestat discovers that he hates being human — and then James disappears with Lestat's vampire body. The most recent vampire tale is *Memnoch the Devil*, published in 1995. As Lestat continues his search for meaning, he meets up with Memnoch, who claims to be the devil himself. Memnoch tells the Creation story from the viewpoint of Satan and offers Lestat the chance to be treated like a prophet. Lestat must choose between following Memnoch or God. In 1995, after completing *Memnoch the Devil*, Rice said that Lestat had "left" her. But she has since given ambiguous responses when asked if she planned to write any more books about the vampires.


THE #1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER
ANNE RICE
Author of Servant of the Bones
MEMNOCH THE DEVIL
THE VAMPIRE CHRONICLES

Despite reviewers' objections to the novels, many concede that Rice has transformed the well-worn elements of vampire lore into something completely original, with vast commercial appeal. Instead of identifying with the victims, Rice's sympathies were always with the vampire, whose self-absorbed quest for identity became the center of the book. This has made her stories even more horrifying to her readers. By identifying with the vampire, readers are forced to recognize the monster within themselves.

Although Rice's novels seemed made for the movies, the film version of *Interview with the Vampire* went through more than 15 different scripts (three of them written by Rice herself) over a 17-year period. It was finally released in 1994, starring Tom Cruise as the vampire Lestat, Brad Pitt as Louis, and Kirsten Dunst as Claudia. Rice disagreed so violently with the decision to cast Cruise in the starring role that she made a number of very public attacks on the actor, stating that his clean-cut image and physical appearance were entirely wrong for the part. But when she saw an advance copy of the film, she was so pleased with Cruise's performance that she took out full-page ads in several major newspapers reversing her position.

Other Novels

Rice has also written other types of novels. In the 1970s, when *Interview with the Vampire* was attacked by critics, Rice was so devastated that she decided to try writing an historical novel. During the nine years that elapsed between the publication of her first and second vampire books, she wrote *The Feast of All Saints* (1979), which tells the story of the "free men of color"—a mixed-race community of about 18,000 living in 19th-century New Orleans. In spite of their wealth, they are outcasts, never accepted into the city's white society.

Rice's second historical novel written during this period, *Cry to Heaven* (1982), also reflects her empathy for individuals living on the fringes of society. Set in 18th-century Venice, it tells the story of the heir of a prominent family who becomes one of Europe's most celebrated castrati. These are males who, because they are castrated in their youth, are able to sing in the high range of female sopranos. Although neither of her historical novels was as commercially successful as *Interview with the Vampire*, some critics still think that they represent Rice's best work.

In addition to her vampire novels, Rice has written about two other types of "undead" creatures: witches and mummies. *The Mummy, or Ramses the Damned* (1989) tells the story of Ramses the Great, who once ruled Egypt. Now a 3,000-year-old mummy, Ramses comes back to life and awakens Cleopatra from the dead. Although it made the best-seller list, reviewers considered it the least successful of her novels. In *The Witching Hour* (1990), Rice created a complex mythological world of a dynasty of witches and an evil spirit, Lasher. The novel reverses the age-old stereotype of the witch as an ugly, wart-covered hag. Instead, this witch is a brilliant and beautiful neurosurgeon named Rowan Mayfair, the 13th-generation witch in her family. *The Witching Hour* became the first of three novels about the Mayfair witches, followed by *Lasher* in 1993 and *Taltos* in 1994. In *Lasher*, which continues the story of the witches, the evil Lasher has become extremely powerful. Rowan gives birth to a Taltos, a being from another race, and then falls ill. The Mayfair family declares war on Lasher, determined to destroy him. This was followed up by *Taltos*, which tells the story of the ancient and long suffering Taltos people. At the same time, Rowan and the Mayfair family continue their battle against evil.

Her most recent novel is *Servant of the Bones* (1996), which takes leave of the universe of vampires and witches found in many of her earlier tales. Instead, it explores the occult and features a powerful, witty genii named Azriel. He tells his life story, starting with his youth in Babylon as an educated, devoted Jew. But Azriel becomes a victim of an evil plot that transforms him into a genii. The novel tells his story as he tries to fight back, from the days of the ancient hanging gardens of Babylon to modern-day Manhattan. "This book is deeply rooted in Jewish and Christian mysticism," Rice says, "and its theme is redemption."

Returning to Her Roots

By the late 1980s, Rice and her husband decided to leave San Francisco and return to New Orleans, where they purchased a Victorian mansion in the city's Garden District. They live not far from the working-class neighborhood where she grew up. Today, tours are conducted through her house so that Rice's fans can see the exact location of certain events in *The Witching Hour* and *Lasher*, both of which are set in the house.

Her neighbors have not always welcomed the tour buses that cruise by on a regular basis, and some are suspicious about Rice's motives in buying up several key pieces of New Orleans real estate. These include the chapel in which her mother's funeral was held and an orphanage that Rice renovated and is using to house her collection of antique dolls and provide office space for her management company. The orphanage is also the site of the yearly "coven meeting" of Rice's fan club, which has more than 7,000 members worldwide.

Rice further angered many New Orleans residents in 1997 when she took a very public stand against the opening of a flashy new restaurant in what had been an abandoned car dealership. She called the neon-lit, peach-colored restaurant "an abomination," attacking its owner for his lack of taste. Rice and her followers view the car dealership as the place where the vampire Lestat, at the end of *Memnoch the Devil,* sees his reflection in the window and vanishes. They felt the restaurant denigrated the place. Yet the majority of the city's residents welcomed the building's renovation in that run-down neighborhood. The owner of the restaurant has sued Rice for libel and accused her of attacking him because she's planning to open a restaurant of her own, called the Cafe Lestat.

The Struggle for Respect

Response to Rice's work has been decidedly mixed. Although some critics praise her gift for spellbinding plots and complex characters, many find her style florid, overwritten, and sluggish, with too many philosophical digressions. While Anne Rice has been called "America's classiest Gothic novelist," she still craves the critical respect that is paid to writers of serious literary fiction.

Yet Rice's fans, on the other hand, are unusually devoted. They visit her Web site, read her newsletter, purchase tickets for the Anne Rice Walking Tour, and stand in line for hours at her book-signings. But most importantly, they buy her books. Over 100 million copies of Rice's books have been sold, testifying to her fans' great respect and affection for her work. In return, Rice is anything but aloof. She still maintains a listed telephone number and often answers calls from her readers personally.

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

Anne and Stan married on October 14, 1961, when she was barely 20. Stan Rice is a painter and a published poet who served for many years as head of the creative writing department at San Francisco State. They had two children: Michele, who was born in 1966 and died in 1972, and Christopher, who was born in 1978. The Rices now live in New Orleans.

ADVICE TO YOUNG WRITERS

When speaking to young writers, Rice emphasizes the importance of persistence. "When you mail out a manuscript, you are not turning in a paper for a grade," she says. "You can mail out a perfectly wonderful and publishable novel and have it rejected 10 times. . . . You have to keep going. You have to never interpret rejection as a failing grade . . . just *keep going.* Keep going until you connect with a person who cares enough about what you've done to publish it. And don't be discouraged if you hit 20 people who aren't that one."

MAJOR INFLUENCES

"My father was a terrific influence on me," Rice says. "He was always reading and writing. . . . He was living proof that a person could write." Howard O'Brien read the works of Edgar Allan Poe, Oscar Wilde, and William Shakespeare to his daughters when they were young. Although none of her sisters has achieved Anne's level of commercial success, two are writers. Her older sister, Alice Borchardt, published her first novel in 1995, and her younger sister, Tamara, is a poet.

Perhaps no person has had as great an influence upon Rice as her hometown of New Orleans. Originally settled by thieves and ruffians who had been released from French jails, the city has always had an amazing diversity of cultures and a tolerance for unusual beliefs and rituals. One example is voodoo. A West Indian religion that originated in Africa, voodoo came to Louisiana with the slave trade. Voodoo sites throughout the city still attract visitors. New Orleans is perhaps most famous for its ghosts and cemeteries and for the wild celebrations that take place in the streets at Mardi Gras. For Rice, New Orleans has always been the place where she feels most at home, and its rich history has been her most profound inspiration.

FAVORITE BOOKS

As a child, Anne's favorite books were *Lives of the Roman Emperors* and *Lives of the Saints.* She was a slow reader and didn't read much fiction until she was about 14. The two books that influenced her most as a teen were Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations* and Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre.*

In her 30s, Rice was "absolutely knocked out" by Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* when she read it for the first time. "I go back to it all the time just to remind myself to write everything I want to say about a character," she says.

HOBBIES AND OTHER INTERESTS

When she's not writing, Rice enjoys watching old movies on television and going to boxing matches. She is fascinated by performers of all kinds, and by sports that involve one individual competing against another or against an outside force.

SELECTED WRITINGS

The "Vampire Chronicle" Series

Interview with the Vampire, 1976
The Vampire Lestat, 1985
The Queen of the Damned, 1988
The Tale of the Body Thief, 1992
Memnoch the Devil, 1995

The "Mayfair Witches" Series

The Witching Hour, 1990
Lasher, 1993
Taltos, 1994

Other Novels

The Feast of All Saints, 1979
Cry to Heaven, 1982
The Mummy, or Ramses the Damned, 1989
Servant of the Bones, 1996

Screenplays

"Interview with a Vampire," 1994

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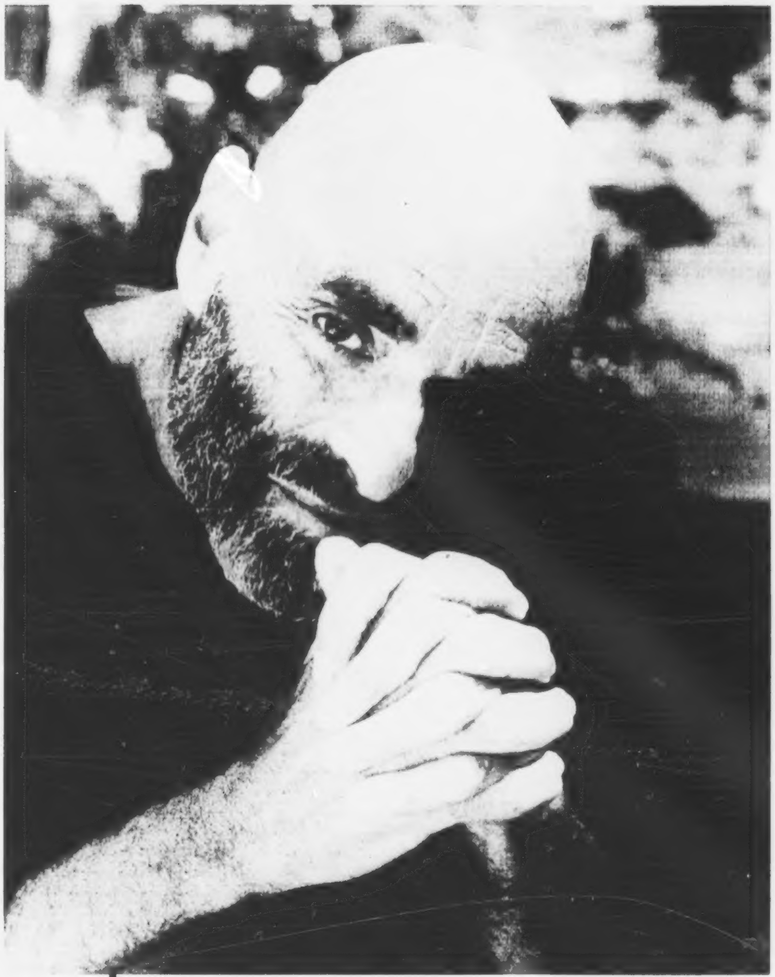


Shel Silverstein 1932-

American Poet, Author, and Illustrator
Creator of *Where the Sidewalk Ends, A Light in the Attic*, and *Falling Up*

BIRTH

Shel Silverstein (pronounced both Sil-ver-steen and Sil-ver-stine) was born in 1932 in Chicago, Illinois. Silverstein is very private about all facts regarding his life. He has not granted an interview since 1975, and he has refused to allow his publisher to release any biographical information about him. Because of this, very little is known about his personal life, and any facts pertaining to his life are at least 20 years old. So his birth date, the names and careers of his parents, or the names of any siblings he might have are not available.

YOUTH

Silverstein grew up in a small town in the Midwest. He said that he began to think about being a writer when he was young, almost as a defense against not being traditionally popular. "When I was a kid—12, 14, around there—I would much rather have been a good baseball player or a hit with the girls," he recalled. "But I couldn't play ball, I couldn't dance. . . . So, I started to draw and to write. I was also lucky that I didn't have anyone to copy, be impressed by. I developed my own style."

FIRST JOBS

Silverstein first drew cartoons for publication when he was in the Army in the early 1950s. While he was stationed in Japan, he began to contribute drawings to *Stars and Stripes,* the periodical produced by the armed services. These were published in the magazine in the 1950s.

After he got out of the service, Silverstein continued to draw cartoons. He submitted them to *Playboy,* which published his work and where his cartoons continue to appear. He also began to write country and rock songs, a creative sideline that he has continued throughout his career as a poet and writer. One of his country tunes, called "A Boy Named Sue," became a big hit for country and western star Johnny Cash and won a Grammy award in 1969.

Silverstein really never planned to write children's books. He remembered that it was children's author and illustrator Tomi Ungerer who "practically dragged me, kicking and screaming, into Ursula Nordstrom's office." Nordstrom is a legendary figure in publishing, who launched many of the most successful careers in children's literature. She admired Silverstein's work and encouraged him. "She convinced me that Tom was right; I could do children's books," Silverstein said.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

Silverstein's first attempt at a children's book was *Uncle Shelby's ABZ Book* (1961). It was unlike almost any book for children that had come out at that point. It had that characteristic Silverstein slyness, written from the point of view of an author who was more in cahoots with his audience than talking down to them. This is how a reviewer in the *New York Times Book Review* described the book's very distinctive point of view: "Uncle Shelby has a theory that children and elderly parties like to be treated as anyone else, not as children and elderly parties." The reviewer claimed that Silverstein got the idea for the book while standing on a street corner licking an ice cream cone.

"Kid came along and looked at it wistfully. 'It's very good,' remarked Uncle Shelby. 'Why don't you ask your mother for one?' Kid got a cone, Uncle Shelby got a dirty look—and a book." So Silverstein's career as a children's writer began with a characteristically "kid-oriented" point of view.

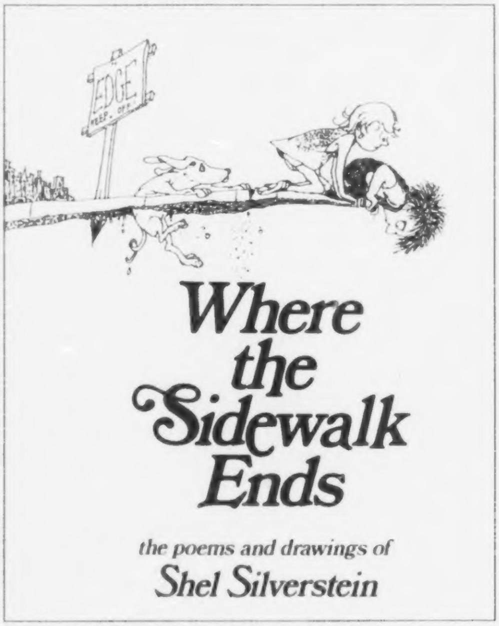
Silverstein's next book, and his own favorite, was *Lafcadio, the Lion Who Shot Back* (1963). It tells the tale of a lion who learns to shoot a gun, and becomes a successful circus star.

The Giving Tree

The book that established Silverstein's reputation as a popular children's author was *The Giving Tree*. This simple tale, about a tree who sacrifices everything for the boy she loves, is as popular now as it was when it was first published in 1964. Many reviewers have written extensively about the book's profound meaning, but Silverstein refuses to discuss why he thinks the book is so successful. "It's just a relationship between two people: one gives, the other takes." In general, Silverstein seems to trust his young readers to develop their own responses to his work.

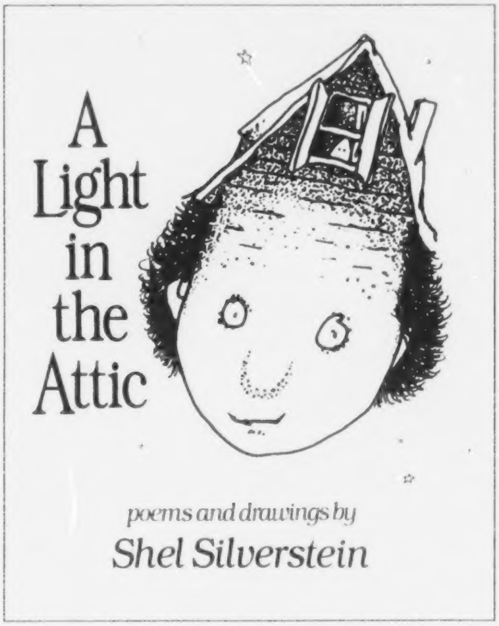
Where the Sidewalk Ends

Silverstein is perhaps best known as a writer of poetry for kids. His first book of children's poems was *Where the Sidewalk Ends*, published in 1974. The book was immediately popular, in part because it broke new ground in children's poetry. Silverstein wrote poems about thumb sucking, taking out the garbage, a man who hasn't ever taken a bath, and other things that kids can relate to and that make them laugh. Some adults found the poems gross or inappropriate. But kids immediately took to Silverstein's poems, and the book is read as much today as it was 20 years ago.



The Missing Piece and *The Missing Piece Meets the Big O*

Silverstein's next works of fiction were *The Missing Piece* (1976) and *the Missing Piece Meets the Big O* (1981). These two books tell the tale of a letter O that's missing a piece of itself and its long journey to find that missing part. Many adult writers tried to find some kind of deep meaning in the books, which they interpret as a moral tale of the quest for self-fulfillment. Silverstein rejects this interpretation. He has always been disturbed by those commentators who see in his books any attempt at a simplistic, happy ending. He believes such an approach creates "an alienation" in the young reader. "The child asks 'why don't I have this happiness thing you're telling me about,' and comes to think when his joy stops that he has failed, that it won't come back," claims Silverstein.



A Light in the Attic

In between the two "Missing Piece" books, Silverstein published a collection of poetry entitled *A Light in the Attic* (1981). Once again kids delighted in poems about subjects like a library book that is 42 years overdue, and a boy who has a hot dog for a pet. The bold line drawings, depicting such things as a snake that can spell "I love you," perfectly match the often funny, sometimes moving poetry. Now more than 15 years old, *A Light in the Attic* continues to be a popular favorite among young readers.

Falling Up

In 1996, Silverstein published his first collection of poetry in many years, *Falling Up*. It is vintage Silverstein, with poems about bad dreams, homework, childhood fears, and in the title poem, the tale of a kid who trips and falls up instead of down. Floating through the air, "I got sick to my stomach, And I threw down." The collection is already proving to be as popular as Silverstein's other volumes and is another unqualified success for this beloved children's author.

THE NATURE OF HIS SUCCESS AND CREATIVE PHILOSOPHY

For more than 30 years, successive generations of new readers have been discovering — and falling in love with — Shel Silverstein's books. Three of his books, *The Giving Tree, Where the Sidewalk Ends,* and *A Light in the Attic,* are among the best-selling hardcover children's books of all time. To date, these books have sold an astounding 11 million copies. Although Silverstein hasn't spoken out in a number of years, his thoughtful comments from his 1975 interview (which appeared in *Publishers Weekly*) about his art and philosophy contain interesting insights into what motivates him: "I have an ego, I have ideas, I want to be articulate, to communicate, but in my own way. People who say they create only for themselves and don't care if they're published . . . I hate to hear talk like that. If it's good, it's too good not to share. That's the way I feel about my work.

"I would hope that people, no matter what age, would find something to identify with in my books, pick one up and experience a personal sense of discovery. That's great. But for them, not for me. I think if you're a creative person, you should just go about your business, do your work and not care about how it's received."

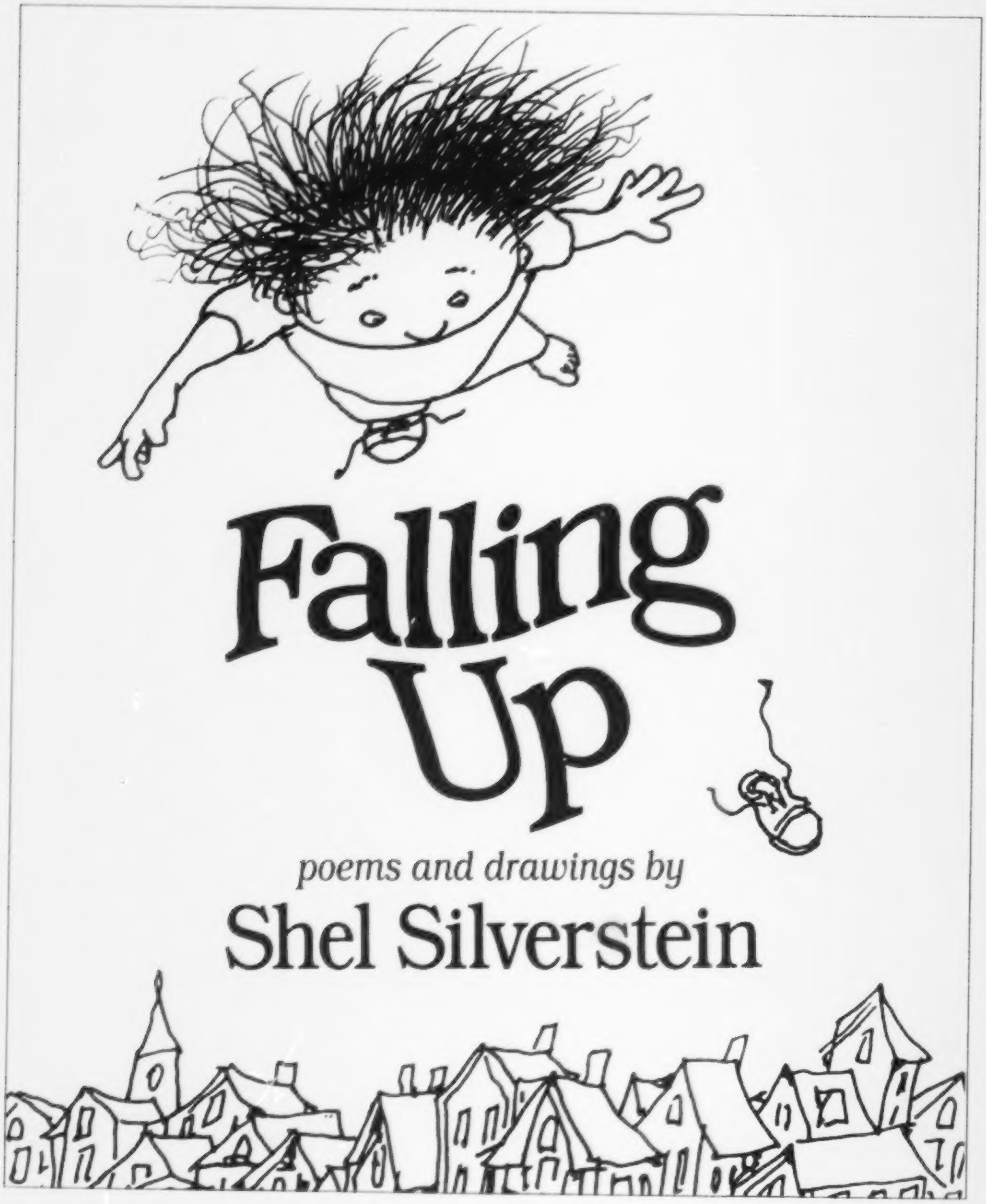
OTHER CREATIVE INTERESTS

Since his earliest published work, Silverstein has also channeled his creative energies in other directions. In the field of music, he composed and sang the material for several solo albums in the 1960s and 1970s, including *Inside Folk Song, Shel Silverstein,* and *Freaker's Ball.* Silverstein plays the guitar, piano, saxophone, and trombone, and he has performed in bands like Papa Bue's Danish Viking New Orleans Jazz Band, written soundtracks to movies (*Who is Harry Kellerman, and Why Is He Saying All Those Terrible Things About Me?*), and composed such rock hits as "Sylvia's Mother" and "Cover of Rolling Stone" for Dr. Hook and the Medicine Show. He has written several plays, including one produced in collaboration with the well-known playwright David Mamet. These works have not received the kind of popular or critical acclaim of his children's books, but they do show the depth and breadth of Silverstein's creativity.

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

The notoriously private Silverstein wants nothing revealed about his marriage, which ended in divorce, nor about his only child, a daughter. One funny story did come to light about his relationship with his daughter. It concerns her belief in the tooth fairy, which Silverstein did not share. When his daughter lost a tooth at his house and woke to find no money under her pillow, she screamed, "Where's my money!" Silverstein realized that he had to improvise. "I thought, 'What am I doing to the kid? All she wanted was a lousy quarter'." So, he grabbed a handful of pennies and gave them to her. "Faced with a screaming six-year-old, for my own comfort I continued the legend of the tooth fairy," admitted Silverstein.

When he granted his last interview, some 20 years ago, Silverstein mentioned that he had homes in New York, Florida, and California.


Falling
Up
poems and drawings by
Shel Silverstein

WRITINGS

Uncle Shelby's ABZ Book, 1961
Lafcadio, the Lion Who Shot Back, 1963
The Giving Tree, 1964
Where the Sidewalk Ends, 1974
The Missing Piece, 1976
A Light in the Attic, 1981
The Missing Piece Meets the Big O, 1981
Falling Up, 1996

HONORS AND AWARDS

Grammy Awards (National Academy of Recording Arts and Science): 1969, for Best Country Song, for "A Boy Named Sue"; 1984, for Best Children's Recording, for *Where the Sidewalk Ends*

ALA Notable Book (American Library Association): 1974, for *Where the Sidewalk Ends*

Outstanding Book Award (*New York Times*): 1974, for *Where the Sidewalk Ends*

Best Book Award (*School Library Journal*): 1981, for *A Light in the Attic*

Children's Choice Award (International Reading Association): 1982, for *The Missing Piece Meets the Big O*

William Allen White Book Award (William Allen White Library): 1984, for *A Light in the Attic*

FURTHER READING

Books

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Fifth Book of Junior Authors and Illustrators, 1983
The Reader's Advisor, 14th ed., Vol. 1
Something about the Author, Vol. 33
Who's Who in America, 1997

Periodicals

New York Times, Jan. 10, 1985, p.16
New York Times Biographical Service, Nov. 1981, p.1584
New York Times Book Review, Sep. 24, 1961, p.8; Apr. 30, 1978, p.57; Mar. 9, 1986, p.36; May 19, 1996, p.29
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U.S. News and World Report, May 20, 1996, p.16

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Laura Ingalls Wilder

Laura Ingalls Wilder 1867-1957

American Children's Author
Creator of the "Little House" Books

BIRTH

Laura Elizabeth Ingalls was born February 7, 1867, in Pepin, Wisconsin. Her parents were Charles and Caroline Ingalls, who made their living over the years as farmers, homesteaders, and innkeepers. Laura had three sisters, Mary, who was older, and Carrie and Grace, who were younger. A brother, Charles Frederick, died in infancy.

YOUTH

Laura Ingalls Wilder's remarkable life was touched by joy and sadness, triumph and despair. Her beloved "Little House" books tell the story of a pioneer family who endured personal and financial loss and physical and emotional distress. This often harsh life was tempered by a strong, loving family bond and by the courage and ingenuity of the family as they confronted the glories and the challenges of the country. "No one who has not pioneered can understand the fascination and the terror of it," Wilder said of her life. It was her ability to render that "fascination and terror" with simplicity and vivid realism that has made Wilder one of the most beloved authors of all time and her work a testament to the triumph of the human spirit.

She was born in the cabin she describes in *Little House in the Big Woods,* in the forests of Wisconsin. The Ingalls lived there for a year, then moved on in 1868, first to Missouri, then to Kansas. Charles Ingalls, known as "Pa" throughout the Little House books, was a restless and adventurous man who moved his family often. He was willing to make a living however he could, and he would find a plot of land, clear it, farm it, and build a home for his family. In Kansas, the Ingalls settled in what was then Indian Territory. As happened throughout their family history, their life in Kansas was plagued with natural and financial disaster. Their first year in Kansas, the entire family came down with malaria; when they recovered, they learned that they had to leave their farm because they had settled on land that had been given in a treaty to the Osage Indians. This part of their life on the Kansas prairie is described in *Little House on the Prairie.*

In 1871, the Ingalls returned to their former home in Wisconsin, where they lived until 1874, when Pa again felt the need to move on. The family traveled west again, this time settling in Walnut Grove, Minnesota, the site of *On the Banks of Plum Creek.* Here, the family lived first in a small dugout that was smaller than the average American bedroom. It was described by one writer as "a single room that measured 10 feet by 10 feet. It had a single window covered by greased paper, and its dirt walls were whitewashed to help scavenge light to brighten it up." Within a year, Pa had built the family a house and planted crops. Finally, it seemed like the Ingalls were on the verge of prosperity.

Then disaster hit in the form of swarms of grasshoppers, which ate all the crops: "I saw them destroy every green thing on the face of the earth," Wilder wrote. The family was faced with ruin. Pa had to leave Walnut Grove and go east to find work, just to keep the family fed. He returned several months later and the family moved to town. There, in 1875, a son, Charles Frederick, called Freddie, was born. Freddie died when he was 10 months old. The next summer the grasshoppers were back, and again they destroyed all the crops. The family moved to Minnesota to live with an aunt and uncle, and Pa found work helping out in the fields of local farmers. When they could afford it, the Ingalls moved on again, this time to Burr Oak, Iowa.

In Burr Oak, Charles and Caroline ran a hotel, and Charles also became part owner of a mill. Laura and her sister Mary worked hard, too, cooking and cleaning for the hotel guests. Another daughter, Grace, was born while the family lived in Burr Oak. In 1877, when Laura was about 10, the family decided to move on again, this time back to Walnut Grove. There, Charles worked in a hotel. Laura worked, too, caring for a local elderly woman and working in a hotel.

In 1879, the family faced its worst tragedy. Mary came down with what was probably scarlet fever; later, she suffered a stroke. She was left blind by her illness. It was a time of great sadness for the family. Many years later Wilder's daughter Rose recalled the event's effect on the Ingalls: "Mary was blind, and that ended everything. In a way, it was an ending for Grandpa and Grandma, too. Mama told me once that they were never quite the same after Mary went blind."

From that point onward, at Pa's insistence, Laura became "Mary's eyes." She described for her sister all the things happening around them: the way the countryside looked in different seasons, the way the people and the animals looked, the way the new country of the Dakota Territory looked as they left Walnut Grove and rode the train to their next home in South Dakota. In many ways, Laura's role as "Mary's eyes" provided her with the chance to develop the descriptive skills she would use to such great effect later, as the author of the "Little House" books. She tried to tell Mary everything, to leave out nothing, and to be as vivid a chronicler of the landscape as she could for her sister.

In 1879, the Ingalls reached De Smet, South Dakota—then Dakota Territory—where Charles had accepted a job working for the railroad. They lived on the prairie, the site for Wilder's *By the Shores of Silver Lake,* where she recounts their early years in South Dakota. Their second winter there, recounted in *The Long Winter,* was one of almost unbearable hardship. They faced nearly six months of blizzards and were virtually cut off from any help. When they ran out of fuel for the fire, they braided straw and burned it to heat the house. The Wilders and the entire town nearly starved, but thanks to the courage of Almanzo Wilder, a family friend, they survived the winter. Almanzo knew that a local farmer had some grain left, even though the townsfolk of De Smet were without food. He and a friend set out in a storm and returned with enough grain to keep the town alive until the thaw.

EDUCATION

Education had always been a priority for the Ingalls family, and Laura and her sisters were either taught at home by their mother or they went to "little red school houses all over the west," as Wilder remembered. After Mary became blind, Laura and Charles both worked hard to raise money to send her to a school for the blind in Iowa. To make money, Laura got her teaching certificate when she was just 15 and started teaching—even though she was one year shy of the legal age to teach.

FIRST JOBS

Laura's first teaching job was in a one-room school outside of De Smet. The students were unruly, and she had to board with a local family who were cold and distant. She visited her family each weekend, thanks to Almanzo Wilder, who had taken quite an interest in her, and drove her back and forth to town in his buggy.

Over the next several years Laura taught school and took in sewing, turning over most of her wages to her parents to help with Mary's education. Thanks to Laura's help, Mary was able to attend the Iowa College for the Blind, where she excelled in academics and music. She spent summers with her family, and after graduation, moved back to De Smet to live with them.

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

Laura and Almanzo, whom she always called Manly, fell in love and became engaged in 1874. On August 25, 1875, they married. Laura changed the wedding vows: she refused to say the portion of the traditional ceremony in which a woman promises to "obey" her husband. "Even if I tried, I do not think I could obey anyone against my better judgment," she reasoned. It was typical of her independence, and also of the truly equal nature of the relationship between the two. After their marriage, they moved to Almanzo's land in De Smet and began to work it together. Their life together is told in *These Happy Golden Years*.

Early Married Life

Like the Ingalls, Laura and Almanzo Wilder's life was full of loss and tragedy from the beginning. In 1885, their crops failed, and since they had borrowed money for supplies and farm implements, they faced mounting debts. Their daughter, Rose, was born in December 1886, a brief ray of light for the Wilders: "Christmas was at hand and Rose was a grand present," Laura wrote. "A hundred precious dollars had gone for doctor bills and medicine and help through the summer and winter so far; but after all, a Rose in December was much rarer that a rose in June, and must be paid for accordingly."

In 1888, both Laura and Almanzo came down with diphtheria and nearly died. Almanzo went back to work on the farm too soon after his illness, and then suffered a stroke. He was partially paralyzed, and his full strength never returned. In 1889 further tragedy struck. An infant son died two weeks after his birth, and the same month their house burned to the ground.

The Wilders decided to leave South Dakota and moved first to Minnesota, where they lived briefly with Almanzo's family. They moved on after a year, this time to Florida, where they hoped that the warmer climate would help restore Almanzo's strength. Yet for all its beauty, Wilder never felt she belonged in Florida. She described their life in the South this way: "We went to live in the piney woods of Florida, where the trees always murmur; where butterflies are enormous, where plants that eat insects grow in moist places and alligators inhabit the slowly moving waters of the rivers. But at that time and in that place a Yankee woman was more of a curiosity than any of these."

Their stay in Florida was brief; Laura couldn't stand the heat and humidity, so they set out for South Dakota, settling in De Smet again. Laura was happy to live near her family, and she and Almanzo made money as they could, Laura working as a dressmaker and Almanzo doing any kind of work. They saved money for what would be their next, and final move, to Missouri.

The Wilders had heard of the beauty and mildness of the Ozarks—called "The Land of the Big Red Apple"—and they set their sights on it as their home. In 1894, they set out for Missouri. The journey took six months, as they traveled by wagon through South Dakota, Nebraska, and Kansas. Laura sent a written account of the trip back to De Smet, where it was published in the newspaper—her first piece of work to appear in print. In the Ozarks, they found a 40-acre farm for sale and bought it. Laura named it "Rocky Ridge." It would be her home for the next 60 years.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

Homemaker, Farmer, and Beginning Writer

Laura and Almanzo worked together to clear the land and begin their farm. They raised chickens, pigs, sheep, and cows. Laura became known throughout the community for her poultry products. As they prospered at last, the Wilders built a ten-room house and increased their property to 200 acres.

Laura was once asked to speak at a local meeting about her successful farming experiences. When she couldn't make the date, she sent her speech instead, and it was read aloud. The editor of *The Missouri Ruralist* was in the audience that evening, and he was impressed with Laura's writing ability. He asked her to become the household editor of the paper, a position she held from 1911 to 1924. She also began to contribute articles to *McCall's* and *The Country Gentleman,* and she was named poultry editor of the *St. Louis Star.*

ILLUSTR
ARTH WILLIAMS

The tireless Wilder also helped out her neighbors as the secretary-treasurer of the Mansfield Farm Loan Association, a bank affiliated with the Federal Loan Board. Over the years she helped to give away over one million dollars in federal loans to local farmers.

Starting the "Little House" Books

The Wilder's daughter Rose grew up at Rocky Ridge, then left to attend college. From college she moved to California, where she became a successful journalist based in San Francisco. In the early 1920s, Rose returned to Rocky Ridge and lived with her parents. While Rose typed out stories in her room, she inspired her mother to write down the stories of her childhood.

Wilder's first effort was a memoir she called "Pioneer Girl," which formed the basis for the "Little House" books. Rose submitted the manuscript to publishers, who were at first discouraging to the budding new author, now in her 60s. Laura revised the manuscript, changing it from an adult memoir into a children's story, the one we know as *Little House in the Big Woods.* It was first read by Virginia Kirkus of Harper, who remembered that the manuscript came to her during the Depression, a time in the 1930s when many people in the country were out of work. People were so poor that few publishers would risk publishing books that most readers could not afford. "All of us were going for that miracle book that no Depression could stop," Kirkus wrote. That book was *Little House in the Big Woods.*

Little House in the Big Woods, first published in 1932, was a phenomenal success. Readers loved the stories of life in the seemingly endless forests of Wisconsin, with wolves howling outside the door as Pa tells his stories and plays his fiddle, as seasons come and go and the family celebrates holidays, and Laura and her sisters grow up, happy and secure in their loving family.

No one was more surprised than Wilder at the success of her book. Children all over the country wrote to her clamoring for more books about pioneer life. So Wilder wrote her second book, *Farmer Boy* (1933), in which she told the story of Almanzo's early life. Encouraged by her readers' requests for more on

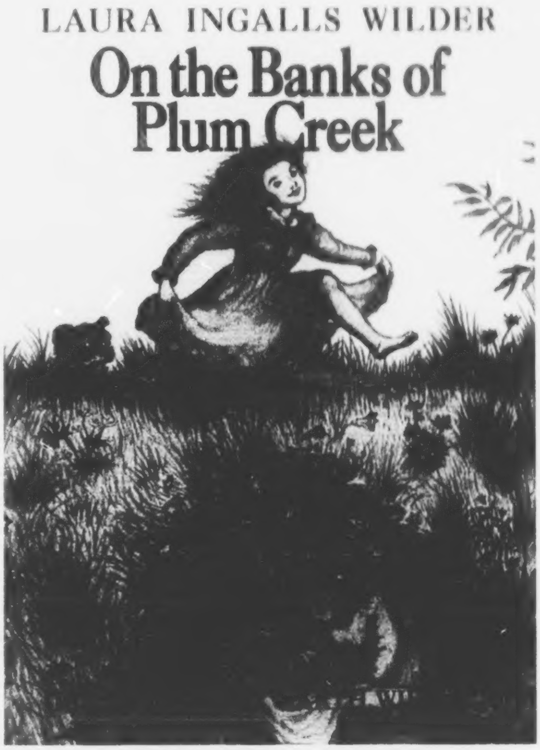
Laura, Wilder went on to write all the "Little House" books, including *Little House on the Prairie* (1935), *On the Banks of Plum Creek* (1937), *By the Shores of Silver Lake* (1939), *The Long Winter* (1940), *Little Town on the Prairie* (1941), and *These Happy Golden Years* (1943).

When asked what had motivated her to write her books, Wilder said this: "I began to think what a wonderful childhood I had had. How I had seen the whole frontier, the woods, the Indian country of the great plains, the frontier towns, the building of railroads in wild, unsettled country, homesteading and farmers coming to take possessions. I realized that I had seen and lived it all. I wanted children now to understand more about the beginning of things, to know what is behind the things they see—what it is that made America as they know it."

Narrative Style in the "Little House" Books

Careful readers of the "Little House" books will note that they do not follow Wilder's life exactly, and that was part of her narrative style. Wilder sometimes made small changes in the age of her central character and in time sequences. For example, her first book, *Little House in the Big Woods*, relates events that happened in the real Laura's life when she was just a baby, but the character, "Laura," is five in the book. Wilder made her that age in the book so she could tell the tale from the point of view of a young girl.

In fact, one of the most significant aspects of the "Little House" books is the way in which Laura's perspective on her world changes as she grows older. In the early books, Laura is a child, and she sees the world through a child's eyes. The language is simple, the point of view is that of a little girl learning about life and family through the stories her Pa tells her and through the pattern of everyday life.



As Laura grows up, so does her perspective on the world. As she enters adolescence, she sees her family and the challenges of life differently, and sees herself differently, too. There is a deepening of her understanding of life's tragedies, as in Mary's blindness, or the near starvation they face in *The Long Winter*. Laura learns to appreciate her parents as complex adults, who have striven for and sacrificed much to give her and her sisters a good life.

The Pictures of Garth Williams

In 1947, the famed children's editor Ursula Nordstrom of Harper requested that children's illustrator Garth Williams create new drawings for a new edition of the "Little House" books. Williams, already the famous illustrator of such children's classics as *Stuart Little* and *Charlotte's Web*, was delighted with the assignment and he took it very seriously. He was familiar with the books, but he had at that point never been west of New York state, and he felt he needed to see the land that Wilder had described so vividly in her books.

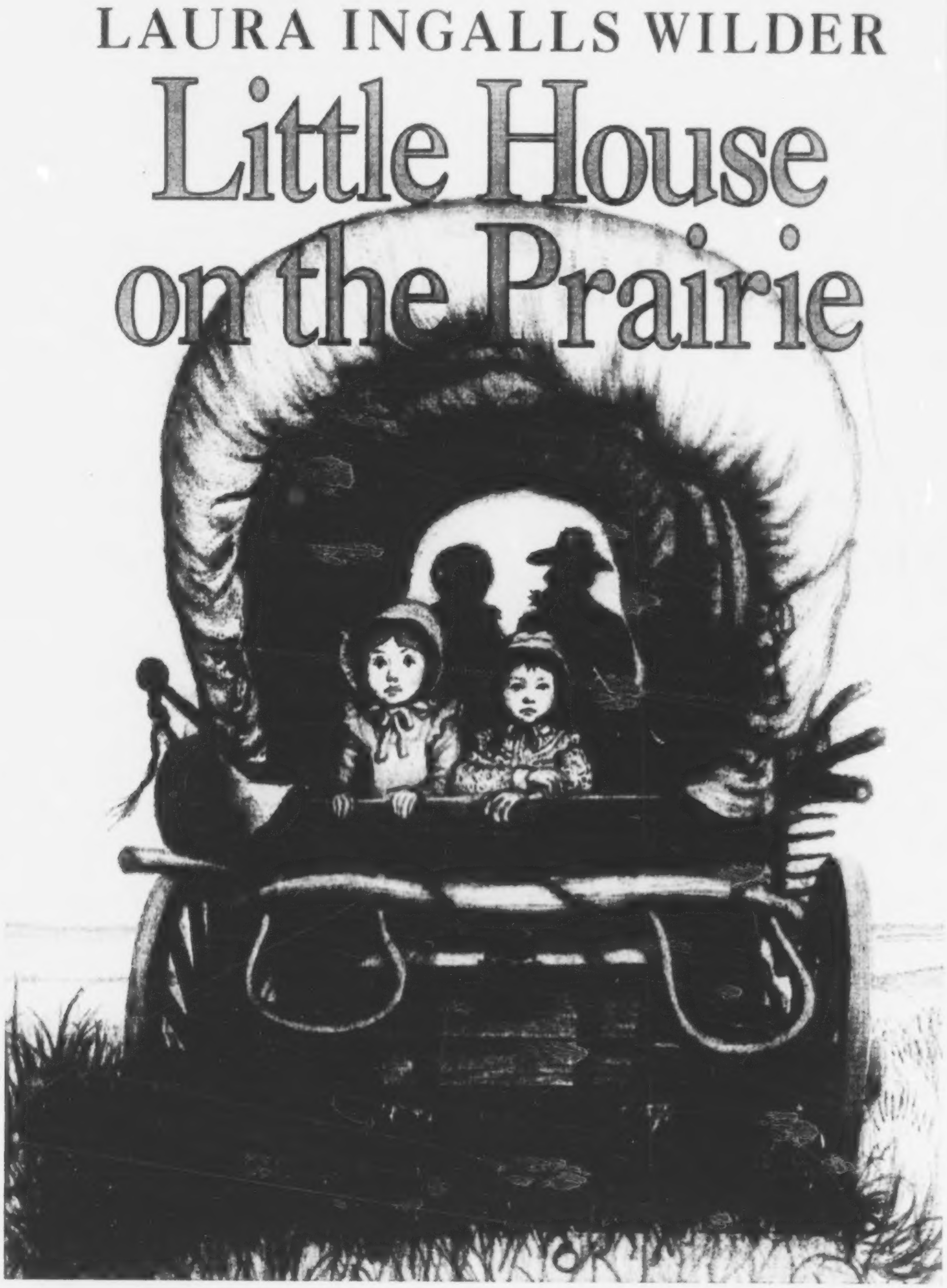
So Williams visited Wilder at Rocky Ridge and actually followed the route the Ingalls family took in the 1800s. He met Wilder and described her like this: "Mrs. Wilder was working in her garden when we arrived and was without any doubt the Laura of her books. She was small and nimble. Her eyes sparkled with good humor and she seemed a good 20 years younger than her age." When Almanzo cautioned Williams not to travel to South Dakota during the late fall months, Laura replied, "Oh, *I* would go."

Following in the footsteps of the Ingalls family, Williams visited and photographed each of the sites and the homesteads of the books. Of Wilder and her accomplishment, Williams said: "She understood the meaning of hardship and struggle, of joy and work, of shyness and bravery. She was never overcome by drabness or squalor. She never glamorized anything; yet she saw the loveliness in everything. This was the way the illustrator had to follow—no glamorizing for him either." For many readers, Williams's warm, engaging illustrations of the "Little House" books are exactly right, catching the many moods and events of these beloved books.

Wilder's Later Life

Throughout the years, Wilder's work received many honors, including the Newbery Honor Book award, which was given to five of her books. So great was her impact on children's literature that the American Library Association named a special award in her honor, the Laura Ingalls Wilder Medal, which is given every five years to an author who, "over a period of years, made a substantial and lasting contribution to literature for children." In 1954, she was the first recipient.

Laura and Almanzo lived their last years at Rocky Ridge, in Mansfield, Missouri. Almanzo died in 1949, at the age of 92. Laura lived on at Rocky


LAURA INGALLS WILDER
Little House on the Prairie

Ridge until February 10, 1957, when she died at the age of 90. After her death, her publishers brought out several other works she had left unpublished at her death, including a diary of the Wilders' trip from South Dakota to Rocky Ridge, *On the Way Home,* which was published in 1962. Nine years later, one of Wilder's unrevised manuscripts appeared as *The First Four Years,* which chronicles her early life with Almanzo. In 1974, Roger MacBride, who was the adopted grandson of Wilder's daughter, Rose, edited and published a collection of Wilder's letters as *West from Home: Letters of Laura Ingalls Wilder to Almanzo Wilder.* These books were welcomed by Wilder's vast audience, but they are considered less well-written than her "Little House" books.

The "Rocky Ridge" Series

In the 1970s, encouraged by the financial success of *The First Four Years* and *West from Home,* Wilder's publisher, HarperCollins, asked Roger MacBride to write a series on Rose Wilder's early life. These became the "Rocky Ridge" series. The books were popular, and several volumes in the "Rocky Ridge" series appeared before MacBride's death in 1995. The success of the "Rocky Ridge" series has led to more books featuring aspects of the lives of the "Little House" characters, including early readers and cookbooks.

A Controversy

In 1992, a controversial biography of Rose Wilder by William Holtz appeared entitled *The Ghost in the Little House: A Life of Rose Wilder Lane.* Holtz claimed that Rose Wilder had reworked her mother's writings so extensively that Rose herself, not Laura Ingalls Wilder, was the true author of the "Little House" books. Wilder specialists from all over the country spoke out against Holtz's book, stating that he had based his theory on the examination of only one of the books, and that he had relied too heavily on scattered references in Rose's letters and notes. In the opinion of most Wilder scholars, there is no evidence to support Holtz's claim.

However, the controversy did bring to light the fact that Wilder and Rose worked in collaboration on the books; that is, Rose reviewed and made suggestions to her mother about how certain passages in the books might be rewritten. But there is documented evidence in Wilder's own handwriting on various versions of the books that she sometimes agreed with Rose, and other times she strongly disagreed with her suggestions and did not incorporate them. So while Holtz's theory stirred up a controversy, his claim is largely ignored.

WILDER'S LEGACY

In her chronicle of the life and times of her family in her famous "Little House" books, Wilder created a portrait of pioneer life that has delighted readers for more than 60 years. The original "Little House" books continue to be a phenomenal success. To date, more than 60 million copies of the books have been sold, in over 20 different languages. New generations of readers continue to be captivated by the life of Laura Ingalls, to thrill to the adventures and share the sorrows of this famed author. Her appeal to the young imagination is timeless, for it inspires the wonder that Laura herself felt at the glory of the American West, at a time when wilderness was disappearing forever. In the plucky Laura Ingalls, Wilder created a character that will endure for generations yet to come.

WRITINGS

The "Little House" Books

Little House in the Big Woods, 1932
Farmer Boy, 1933
Little House on the Prairie, 1935
On the Banks of Plum Creek, 1937
By the Shores of Silver Lake, 1939
The Long Winter, 1940
Little Town on the Prairie, 1941
These Happy Golden Years, 1943
The First Four Years, 1971

Diaries and Letters

On the Way Home, 1962
West from Home, 1974

HONORS AND AWARDS

Laura Ingalls Wilder Award (American Library Association): 1954

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Anderson, William. *Laura Wilder of Mansfield,* 1968
——. *The Story of the Wilders,* 1968
——. *Laura Ingalls Wilder: Pioneer and Author,* 1987
——. *The Walnut Grove Story of Laura Ingalls Wilder,* 1987
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Anderson, William, ed. *The Horn Book's Laura Ingalls Wilder,* 1987
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Giff, Patricia Reilly. *Laura Ingalls Wilder: Growing Up in the Little House,* 1987 (juvenile)
Something about the Author, Vol. 29

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World Book Encyclopedia, 1996

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Chicago Tribune, Oct. 29, 1992, p.A2; Feb. 17, 1993, TEMPO Section, p.1
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New York Times, Feb. 12, 1957, p.A27
Philadelphia Daily News, Apr. 20, 1996, p.17
St. Paul Pioneer Press, Aug. 1, 1993, p.F1
Washington Post, Dec. 11, 1988, p.E1

WORLD WIDE WEB ADDRESS

Rocky Ridge and other sites where Laura Ingalls Wilder lived have become historic places that are visited by thousands of her many fans each year. In Wisconsin, New York, Kansas, Minnesota, Iowa, South Dakota, and Missouri, there are historic sites and museums that provide information and materials on Wilder and her books. The Web Site below contains much information on Wilder and the historic places associated with her work:

http:\www.livonia.lib.mi.us

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Name Index

Listed below are the names of all individuals profiled in *Biography Today,* followed by the date of the issue in which they appear.

Aaron, Hank . . . . Sport 96
Aaron, Henry
  see Aaron, Hank . . . . Sport 96
Abbey, Edward . . . . Env 97
Abdul, Paula . . . . Jan 92
Abdul-Jabbar, Kareem . . . . Sport 96
Adams, Ansel . . . . Artist 96
Agassi, Andre . . . . Jul 92
Aidid, Mohammed Farah . . . . ModAfr 97
Aikman, Troy . . . . Apr 95
Albright, Madeleine . . . . Apr 97
Alcindor Lew
  see Abdul-Jabbar, Kareem . . . . Sport 96
Allen, Marcus . . . . Sep 97
Allen, Tim . . . . Apr 94
Alley, Kirstie . . . . Jul 92
Amin, Idi . . . . ModAfr 97
Anderson, Gillian . . . . Jan 97
Anderson, Marian . . . . Jan 94
Anderson, Terry . . . . Apr 92
Andretti, Mario . . . . Sep 94
Andrews, Ned . . . . Sep 94
Angelou, Maya . . . . Apr 93
Arafat, Yasir . . Sep 94; Update 94; Update 95; Update 96
Arantes do Nascimento, Edson
  see Pelé . . . . Sport 96
Aristide, Jean-Bertrand . . . . Jan 95
Arnold, Roseanne . . . . Oct 92
Ashe, Arthur . . . . Sep 93
Asimov, Isaac . . . . Jul 92
Askins, Renee . . . . Env 97
Aung San Suu Kyi . . . . Apr 96
Avi . . . . Jan 93
Babbitt, Bruce . . . . Jan 94
Baiul, Oksana . . . . Apr 95
Baker, James . . . . Oct 92
Baldwin, James . . . . Author 96
Banda, Hastings Kamuzu . . . . ModAfr 97
Bardeen, John . . . . Science 96
Barkley, Charles . . . . Apr 92
Barr, Roseanne
  see Arnold, Roseanne . . . . Oct 92
Battle, Kathleen . . . . Jan 93
Bearden, Romare . . . . Artist 96
Berenstain, Jan . . . . Author 96
Berenstain, Stan . . . . Author 96
Bergen, Candice . . . . Sep 93
Berry, Halle . . . . Jan 95
Bhutto, Benazir . . . . Apr 95
Bialik, Mayim . . . . Jan 94
Bird, Larry . . . . Jan 92
Blair, Bonnie . . . . Apr 94; Update 95
Blanchard, Rachel . . . . Apr 97
Blume, Judy . . . . Jan 92
Blythe William J. IV
  see Clinton, Bill . . . . Jul 92
Bollea, Terry J.
  see Hogan, Hulk . . . . Apr 92
Boulmerka, Hassiba . . . . Sport 96
Bourke-White, Margaret . . . . Artist 96
Boutros-Ghali, Boutros . . . . Apr 93
Boyd, Candy Dawson . . . . Author 97
Boyz II Men . . . . Jan 96
Bradbury, Ray . . . . Author 97
Bradley, Ed . . . . Apr 94
Brandis, Jonathan . . . . Sep 95
Brandy . . . . Apr 96
Breathed, Berke . . . . Jan 92
Breathed, Guy Berkeley
  see Breathed, Berke . . . . Jan 92
Brooks, Garth . . . . Oct 92
Brooks, Gwendolyn . . . . Author 97
Brower, David . . . . Env 97
Brown, Ron . . . . Sep 96
Bryan, Zachery Ty . . . . Jan 97
Burger, Warren . . . . Sep 95
Burke, Chris . . . . Sep 93

Burns, Ken . . . . . . Jan 95
Burrell, Stanley Kirk
  see Hammer . . . . . . Jan 92
Bush, Barbara . . . . . . Jan 92
Bush, George . . . . . . Jan 92
Butcher, Susan . . . . . . Sport 96
Calder, Alexander . . . . . . Artist 96
Cameron, Candace . . . . . . Apr 95
Candy, John . . . . . . Sep 94
Carey, Mariah . . . . . . Apr 96
Carle, Eric . . . . . . Author 95
Carpenter, Mary Chapin . . . . . . Sep 94
Carrey, Jim . . . . . . Apr 96
Carson, Rachel . . . . . . Env 97
Carter, Jimmy . . . . . . Apr 95
Carvey, Dana . . . . . . Jan 93
Castro, Fidel . . . . . . Jul 92; Update 94
Chagall, Marc . . . . . . Artist 96
Champagne, Larry III . . . . . . Apr 96
Chavez, Cesar . . . . . . Sep 93
Chavis, Benjamin . . . . . . Jan 94; Update 94
Childress, Alice . . . . . . Author 95
Christo . . . . . . Sep 96
Chung, Connie . . . . . . Jan 94; Update 95; Update 96
Cisneros, Henry . . . . . . Sep 93
Cleary, Beverly . . . . . . Apr 94
Clinton, Bill . . . Jul 92; Update 94; Update 95; Update 96
Clinton, Chelsea . . . . . . Apr 96
Clinton, Hillary Rodham . . . . . . Apr 93; Update 94; Update 95; Update 96
Cobain, Kurt . . . . . . Sep 94
Cohen, Adam Ezra . . . . . . Apr 97
Coolio . . . . . . Sep 96
Cormier, Robert . . . . . . Author 95
Cosby, Bill . . . . . . Jan 92
Cousteau, Jacques . . . . . . Jan 93
Crawford, Cindy . . . . . . Apr 93
Culkin, Macaulay . . . . . . Sep 93
Dahl, Roald . . . . . . Author 95
Danes, Claire . . . . . . Sep 97
Daniel, Beth . . . . . . Sport 96
Davis, Jim . . . . . . Author 95
Dawson, Marguerite Cecille
  see Boyd, Candy Dawson . . . . . . Author 97
de Klerk, F.W. . . . . . . Apr 94; Update 94
de Mille, Agnes . . . . . . Jan 95
Denton, Sandi
  see Salt 'N' Pepa . . . . . . Apr 95
Diana, Princess of Wales . . . Jul 92; Update 96
Dick, Tim Allen
  see Allen, Tim . . . . . . Apr 94
Dion, Celine . . . . . . Sep 97
Doherty, Shannen . . . . . . Apr 92; Update 94
Dole, Bob . . . . . . Jan 96; Update 96
Dole, Elizabeth Hanford . . . Jul 92; Update 96
Domingo, Placido . . . . . . Sep 95
Douglas, Marjory Stoneman . . . . . . Env 97
Dove, Rita . . . . . . Jan 94
Driscoll, Jean . . . . . . Sep 97
Duchovny, David . . . . . . Apr 96
Duke, David . . . . . . Apr 92
Duncan, Lois . . . . . . Sep 93
Earle, Sylvia . . . . . . Science 96
Edelman, Marian Wright . . . . . . Apr 93
Ellerbee, Linda . . . . . . Apr 94
Ellison, Ralph . . . . . . Author 97
Estefan, Gloria . . . . . . Jul 92
Evans, Janet . . . . . . Jan 95; Update 96
Evert, Chris . . . . . . Sport 96
Ewing, Patrick . . . . . . Jan 95
Farrakhan, Louis . . . . . . Jan 97
Fedorov, Sergei . . . . . . Apr 94; Update 94
Fielder, Cecil . . . . . . Sep 93
Fields, Debbi . . . . . . Jan 96
Filipovic, Zlata . . . . . . Sep 94
Fitzgerald, Ella . . . . . . Jan 97
Fitzhugh, Louise . . . . . . Author 97
Ford, Harrison . . . . . . Sep 97
Foreman, Dave . . . . . . Env 97
Fossey, Dian . . . . . . Science 96
Frankenthaler, Helen . . . . . . Artist 96
Fresh Prince
  see Smith, Will . . . . . . Sep 94
Fuentes, Daisy . . . . . . Jan 94
Gadaffi, Muammar
  see Qaddafi, Muammar . . . . . . Apr 97
Gaddafi, Muammar
  see Qaddafi, Muammar . . . . . . Apr 97
Galeczka, Chris . . . . . . Apr 96
Garcia, Jerry . . . . . . Jan 96
Garth, Jennie . . . . . . Apr 96
Gates, Bill . . . . . . Apr 93
Geisel, Theodor Seuss
  see Seuss, Dr. . . . . . . Jan 92
George, Jean Craighead . . . . . . Author 97
Gibbs, Lois . . . . . . Env 97
Gilbert, Sara . . . . . . Apr 93
Gillespie, Dizzy . . . . . . Apr 93

Gillespie, John Birks
see Gillespie, Dizzy . . . . Apr 93
Gingrich, Newt. Apr 95
Ginsburg, Ruth Bader. . . . . Jan 94
Goff, Helen Lyndon
see Travers, P.L. . . . . Author 96
Goldberg, Whoopi . . . . Apr 94
Goodall, Jane . . . . Science 96
Goodman, John . . . . Sep 95
Gorbachev, Mikhail . . . . . . Jan 92; Update 96
Gore, Al . . . . Jan 93; Update 96
Graf, Steffi . . . . Jan 92
Grant, Amy . . . . Jan 95
Gretzky, Wayne. . . . . Jan 92; Update 93
Griffey, Ken, Jr. . . . . Sport 96
Griffith Joyner, Florence . . . . Sport 96
Grisham, John . . . . Author 95
Groening, Matt . . . . Jan 92
Guey, Wendy . . . . Sep 96
Guisewite, Cathy . . . . Sep 93
Gumbel Bryant . . . . Apr 97
Guy, Jasmine . . . . Sep 93
Haile Selassie . . . . ModAfr 97
Haley, Alex . . . . Apr 92
Hamilton, Virginia . . . . Author 95
Hammer. . . . . Jan 92
Handford, Martin . . . . Jan 92
Hanks, Tom . . . . Jan 96
Harding, Tonya . . . . Sep 94
Hargreaves, Alison . . . . Jan 96
Hart, Melissa Joan. . . . . Jan 94
Hassan II . . . . ModAfr 97
Hawking, Stephen. . . . . Apr 92
Healy, Bernadine . . . . Science 96
Herriot, James. . . . . Author 95
Hill, Anita. . . . . Jan 93
Hill, Grant . . . . Sport 96
Hillary, Sir Edmund. . . . . Sep 96
Hinton, S.E.. Author 95
Hogan, Hulk. . . . . Apr 92
Hooper, Geoff . . . . Jan 94
Horner, Jack . . . . Science 96
Horowitz, Winona Laura
see Ryder, Winona . . . . Jan 93
Houston, Whitney . . . . Sep 94
Hussein, Saddam . . . . Jul 92; Update 96
Iacocca, Lee A.. Jan 92
Ice-T. . . . . Apr 93
Ivey, Artis, Jr.
see Coolio. . . . . Sep 96
Jackson, Bo. . . . . Jan 92; Update 93
Jackson, Jesse . . . . Sep 95
Jackson, Vincent Edward
see Jackson, Bo . . . . Jan 92
James, Cheryl
see Salt 'N' Pepa . . . . Apr 95
Jamison, Judith . . . . Jan 96
Jansen, Dan. . . . . Apr 94
Javacheff, Christo V.
see Christo . . . . Sep 96
Jemison, Mae . . . . Oct 92
Jennings, Peter . . . . Jul 92
Jobs, Steven . . . . Jan 92
John Paul II . . . Oct 92; Update 94; Update 95
Johns, Jasper . . . . Artist 96
Johnson, Caryn
see Goldberg, Whoopi . . . . Apr 94
Johnson, Earvin
see Johnson, Magic . . . . Apr 92
Johnson, John . . . . Jan 97
Johnson, Magic. Apr 92
Johnson, Marguerite
see Angelou, Maya . . . . Apr 93
Johnson, Michael . . . . Jan 97
Jones, James Earl. . . . . Jan 95
Jordan, Barbara. Apr 96
Jordan, Michael . . . . Jan 92; Update 93;
Update 94; Update 95
Joyner-Kersee, Jackie . . . . . Oct 92; Update 96
Kaunda, Kenneth . . . . ModAfr 97
Kazzafi, Muammar
see Qaddafi, Muammar . . . . Apr 97
Kenyatta, Jomo . . . . ModAfr 97
Kerr, M.E. . . . . Author 95
Kerrigan, Nancy . . . . Apr 94
Khadafy, Muammar
see Qaddafi, Muammar . . . . Apr 97
King, Stephen. . . . . Author 95
Kistler, Darci . . . . Jan 93
Konigsburg, E. L. . . . . Author 97
Krim, Mathilde. . . . . Science 96
Krone, Julie . . . . Jan 95
Lalas, Alexi . . . . Sep 94
Land, Edwin. Science 96
lang, k.d. . . . . Sep 93
Lang, Katherine Dawn
see lang, k.d.. . . . . Sep 93
Larson, Gary. Author 95
Lawrence, Jacob . . . . Artist 96
Leakey, Louis. . . . . Science 96
Leakey, Mary . . . . Science 96

Lee, Shelton J.
  see Lee, Spike . . . Apr 92
Lee, Spike . . . Apr 92
Leibovitz, Annie . . . Sep 96
Lemieux, Mario . . . Jul 92; Update 93
LeMond, Greg . . . Sport 96
L'Engle, Madeleine . . . Jan 92
Leno, James Douglas Muir
  see Leno, Jay . . . Jul 92
Leno, Jay . . . Jul 92
Letterman, David . . . Jan 95
Levi-Montalcini, Rita . . . Science 96
Lewis, C. S. . . . Author 97
Lewis, Carl . . . Sep 96
Limbaugh, Rush . . . Sep 95
Lin, Maya . . . Sep 97
Locklear, Heather . . . Jan 95
Lopez, Charlotte . . . Apr 94
Lovell, Jim . . . Jan 96
Lucas, George . . . Apr 97
Ma, Yo-Yo . . . Jul 92
Maathai, Wangari . . . Env 97
Macaulay, David . . . Author 96
MacLachlan, Patricia . . . Author 96
Madden, John . . . Sep 97
Makonnen, Ras
  see Haile Selassie . . . ModAfr 97
Mandela, Nelson . . . Jan 92; Update 94
Mandela, Winnie . . . ModAfr 97
Mankiller, Wilma . . . Apr 94
Mantle, Mickey . . . Jan 96
Margulis, Lynn . . . Sep 96
Marino, Dan . . . Apr 93
Marrow, Tracy
  see Ice-T . . . Apr 93
Marsalis, Wynton . . . Apr 92
Marshall, Thurgood . . . Jan 92; Update 93
Martin, Ann M. . . . Jan 92
Masih, Iqbal . . . Jan 96
McCary, Michael
  see Boyz II Men . . . Jan 96
McClintock, Barbara . . . Oct 92
McCully, Emily Arnold . . . Jul 92; Update 93
McEntire, Reba . . . Sep 95
McFadden, Kevin
  see Pike, Christopher . . . Sep 96
McKissack, Fredrick L. . . . Author 97
McKissack, Patricia C. . . . Author 97
McPherson, Newton L.
  see Gingrich, Newt . . . Apr 95
Meaker, Marijane
  see Kerr, M.E. . . . Author 95
Menchu, Rigoberta . . . Jan 93
Mendes, Chico . . . Env 97
Mendes, Francisco
  see Mendes, Chico
Messier, Mark . . . Apr 96
Miller, Shannon . . . Sep 94; Update 96
Mittermeier, Russell A. . . . Env 97
Mobutu, Joseph-Desire
  see Mobutu Sese Seko . . . ModAfr 97
Mobutu Sese Seko . . . ModAfr 97
Monroe, Bill . . . Sep 97
Montana, Joe . . . Jan 95; Update 95
Moore, Henry . . . Artist 96
Morissette, Alanis . . . Apr 97
Morris, Nathan
  see Boyz II Men . . . Jan 96
Morris, Wanya
  see Boyz II Men . . . Jan 96
Morrison, Samuel . . . Sep 97
Morrison, Toni . . . Jan 94
Moses, Anna Mary Robertson
  see Moses, Grandma . . . Artist 96
Moses, Grandma . . . Artist 96
Mugabe, Robert . . . ModAfr 97
Murie, Margaret . . . Env 97
Murie, Olaus J. . . . Env 97
Myers, Walter Dean . . . Jan 93; Update 94
Navratilova, Martina . . . Jan 93; Update 94
Naylor, Phyllis Reynolds . . . Apr 93
Ndeti, Cosmas . . . Sep 95
Nevelson, Louise . . . Artist 96
Ngengi, Kamau wa
  see Kenyatta, Jomo . . . ModAfr 97
Nixon, Joan Lowery . . . Author 95
Nixon, Richard . . . Sep 94
Nkrumah, Kwame . . . ModAfr 97
Norman, Greg . . . Jan 94
Norwood, Brandy
  see Brandy . . . Apr 96
Novello, Antonia . . . Apr 92; Update 93
Nureyev, Rudolf . . . Apr 93
Nyerere, Julius Kambarage . . . ModAfr 97
Ochoa, Severo . . . Jan 94
O'Connor, Sandra Day . . . Jul 92
O'Dell, Scott . . . Author 96
O'Donnell, Rosie . . . Apr 97
O'Keeffe, Georgia . . . Artist 96
Olajuwon, Hakeem . . . Sep 95

Oleynik, Larisa . . . Sep 96
Oliver, Patsy Ruth . . . Env 97
Olsen, Ashley . . . Sep 95
Olsen, Mary Kate . . . Sep 95
O'Neal, Shaquille . . . Sep 93
Oppenheimer, J. Robert . . . Science 96
Owens, Dana
  see Queen Latifah . . . Apr 92
Parkinson, Jennifer . . . Apr 95
Parks, Gordon . . . Artist 96
Parks, Rosa . . . Apr 92; Update 94
Paterson, Katherine . . . Author 97
Pauley, Jane . . . Oct 92
Pauling, Linus . . . Jan 95
Paulsen, Gary . . . Author 95
Pei, I.M. . . . Artist 96
Pelé . . . Sport 96
Perlman, Itzhak . . . Jan 95
Perot, H. Ross . . . Apr 92; Update 93; Update 95; Update 96
Perry, Luke . . . Jan 92
Peterson, Roger Troy . . . Env 97
Phoenix, River . . . Apr 94
Pike, Christopher . . . Sep 96
Pine, Elizabeth Michele . . . Jan 94
Pinkney, Jerry . . . Author 96
Pippen, Scottie . . . Oct 92
Pippig, Uta . . . Sport 96
Powell, Colin . . Jan 92; Update 93; Update 95
Prelutsky, Jack . . . Author 96
Priestley, Jason . . . Apr 92
Qaddafi, Muammar . . . Apr 97
Qadhafi, Muammar
  see Qaddafi, Muammar . . . Apr 97
Queen Latifah . . . Apr 92
Quintanilla, Selena
  see Selena . . . Jan 96
Rabin, Yitzhak . . . Oct 92; Update 93; Update 94; Update 95
Reeve, Christopher . . . Jan 97
Reid Banks, Lynne . . . Author 96
Reno, Janet . . . Sep 93
Rice, Anne . . . Author 97
Rice, Jerry . . . Apr 93
Ride, Sally . . . Jan 92
Ringgold, Faith . . . Author 96
Ripken, Cal, Jr. . . . Sport 96
Rivera, Diego . . . Artist 96
Roberts, Cokie . . . Apr 95
Robinson, David . . . Sep 96
Robinson, Mary . . . Sep 93
Rockwell, Norman . . . Artist 96
Rodman, Dennis . . . Apr 96
Roper, Dee Dee
  see Salt 'N' Pepa . . . Apr 95
Rose, Pete . . . Jan 92
Rudolph, Wilma . . . Apr 95
Ryan, Nolan . . . Oct 92; Update 93
Ryder, Winona . . . Jan 93
Rylant, Cynthia . . . Author 95
Sabin, Albert . . . Science 96
Sadat, Anwar . . . ModAfr 97
Sagan, Carl . . . Science 96
Salinger, J.D. . . . Author 96
Salk, Jonas . . . Jan 94; Update 95
Salt 'N' Pepa . . . Apr 95
Sampras, Pete . . . Jan 97
Sanchez Vicario, Arantxa . . . Sport 96
Sanders, Barry . . . Sep 95
Sanders, Deion . . . Sport 96
Saro-Wiwa, Ken . . . Env 97
Savimbi, Jonas . . . ModAfr 97
Scarry, Richard . . . Sep 94
Schroeder, Pat . . . Jan 97
Schulz, Charles M . . . Author 96
Schwarzkopf, H. Norman . . . Jan 92
Sealfon, Rebecca . . . Sep 97
Seinfeld, Jerry . . . Oct 92
Selena . . . Jan 96
Seles, Monica . . . Jan 96
Sendak, Maurice . . . Author 96
Senghor, Léopold Sédar . . . ModAfr 97
Seuss, Dr. . . . Jan 92
Shakur, Tupac . . . Apr 97
Shatner, William . . . Apr 95
Shula, Don . . . Apr 96
Silverstein, Shel . . . Author 97
Smith, Cynthia
  see Rylant, Cynthia . . . Author 95
Smith, Emmitt . . . Sep 94
Smith, Will . . . Sep 94
Soren, Tabitha . . . Jan 97
Sornberger, Tabitha
  see Soren, Tabitha . . . Jan 97
Speare, Elizabeth George . . . Sep 95
Spencer, Diana
  see Diana, Princess of Wales . . . Jul 92
Spielberg, Steven . . . Jan 94; Update 94; Update 95
Spinelli, Jerry . . . Apr 93
Spock, Dr. Benjamin . . . Sep 95
Steinem, Gloria . . . Oct 92

Stewart, Patrick . . . . Jan 94
Stine, R.L. . . . . Apr 94
Stockman, Shawn
  see Boyz II Men. . . . . Jan 96
Strug, Kerri . . . . Sep 96
Tarvin, Herbert . . . . Apr 97
Taylor, Mildred D. . . . . Author 95
Thiessen, Tiffani-Amber . . . . Jan 96
Thomas, Clarence . . . . Jan 92
Thomas, Dave. . . . . Apr 96
Thomas, Jonathan Taylor . . . . Apr 95
Thomas, Lewis . . . . Apr 94
Travers, P.L. . . . . Author 96
Tubman, William V. S. . . . . ModAfr 97
Tuttle, Merlin . . . . Apr 97
Van Allsburg, Chris . . . . Apr 92
Van Meter, Vicki . . . . Jan 95
Voigt, Cynthia. Oct 92
Vonnegut, Kurt, Jr. . . . . Author 95
Walcott, Louis Eugene
  see Farrakhan, Louis . . . . Jan 97
Walters, Barbara. . . . . Sep 94
Ward, Charlie . . . . Apr 94
Warhol, Andy . . . . Artist 96
Warhola, Andy
  see Warhol, Andy. . . . . Artist 96
Washington, Denzel. . . . . Jan 93
Watson, James D. . . . . Science 96
Watson, Paul . . . . Env 97
Watterson, Bill. Jan 92
Watterson, William B. II
  see Watterson, Bill . . . . Jan 92
Wayans, Keenen Ivory . . . . Jan 93
Weiss, Jonathan
  see Thomas, Jonathan Taylor . . . . Apr 95
Werbach, Adam . . . . Env 97
White, E.B. Author 95
White, Jaleel. . . . . Jan 96
Whitestone, Heather . . . . Apr 95
Wight, James Alfred
  see Herriot, James . . . . Author 95
Wilder, Laura Ingalls . . . . Author 97
Williams, Garth . . . . Author 96
Williams, Robin . . . . Apr 92
Wilson, Mara . . . . Jan 97
Winfield, Dave. Jan 93
Winfrey, Oprah . . . . Apr 92
Wojtyla, Karol Josef
  see John Paul II . . . . Oct 92
Woods, Eldrick
  see Woods, Tiger. . . . . Sport 96
Woods, Tiger . . . . Sport 96
Wortis, Avi
  see Avi . . . . Jan 93
Wright, Frank Lloyd . . . . Artist 96
Yamaguchi, Kristi. . . . . Apr 92
Yeltsin, Boris . . . . Apr 92; Update 93;
  Update 95; Update 96
Young, Steve . . . . Jan 94
Zamora, Pedro . . . . Apr 95
Zindel, Paul. Author 95
Zmeskal, Kim . . . . Jan 94

General Index

This index includes subjects, occupations, organizations, and ethnic and minority origins that pertain to individuals profiled in *Biography Today*.

"ABC World News Tonight"
- Jennings, Peter . . . . Jul 92

activists
- Arafat, Yasir. Sep 94; Update 94; Update 95
- Ashe, Arthur . . . . Sep 93
- Askins, Renee . . . . Env 97
- Aung San Suu Kyi . . . . Apr 96
- Banda, Hastings Kamuzu . . . . . ModAfr 97
- Brower, David . . . . Env 97
- Chavez, Cesar . . . . Sep 93
- Chavis, Benjamin . . . . . . Jan 94; Update 94
- Douglas, Marjory Stoneman . . . . . . Env 97
- Edelman, Marian Wright . . . . Apr 93
- Foreman, Dave . . . . Env 97
- Gibbs, Lois . . . . Env 97
- Jackson, Jesse . . . . Sep 95
- Kaunda, Kenneth . . . . ModAfr 97
- Kenyatta, Jomo . . . . ModAfr 97
- Maathai, Wangari . . . . Env 97
- Mandela, Nelson . . . . Jan 92; Update 94
- Mandela, Winnie . . . . ModAfr 97
- Mankiller, Wilma . . . . Apr 94
- Masih, Iqbal . . . . Jan 96
- Menchu, Rigoberta . . . . Jan 93
- Mendes, Chico . . . . Env 97
- Mugabe, Robert . . . . ModAfr 97
- Nkrumah, Kwame . . . . ModAfr 97
- Nyerere, Julius Kambarage . . . . ModAfr 97
- Oliver, Patsy Ruth . . . . Env 97
- Parks, Rosa . . . . Apr 92; Update 94
- Pauling, Linus . . . . Jan 95
- Saro-Wiwa, Ken . . . . Env 97
- Savimbi, Jonas . . . . ModAfr 97
- Spock, Benjamin . . . . Sep 95
- Steinem, Gloria . . . . Oct 92
- Watson, Paul . . . . Env 97
- Werbach, Adam . . . . Env 97
- Zamora, Pedro . . . . Apr 95

actors/actresses
- Allen, Tim . . . . Apr 94
- Alley, Kirstie . . . . Jul 92
- Anderson, Gillian . . . . Jan 97
- Arnold, Roseanne . . . . Oct 92
- Bergen, Candice . . . . Sep 93
- Berry, Halle . . . . Jan 95
- Bialik, Mayim . . . . Jan 94
- Blanchard, Rachel . . . . Apr 97
- Brandis, Jonathan . . . . Sep 95
- Brandy . . . . Apr 96
- Bryan, Zachery Ty . . . . Jan 97
- Burke, Chris . . . . Sep 93
- Cameron, Candace . . . . Apr 95
- Candy, John . . . . Sep 94
- Carrey, Jim . . . . Apr 96
- Carvey, Dana . . . . Jan 93
- Culkin, Macaulay . . . . Sep 93
- Danes, Claire . . . . Sep 97
- Doherty, Shannen . . . . . Apr 92; Update 94
- Duchovny, David . . . . Apr 96
- Ford, Harrison . . . . Sep 97
- Garth, Jennie . . . . Apr 96
- Gilbert, Sara . . . . Apr 93
- Goldberg, Whoopi . . . . Apr 94
- Goodman, John . . . . Sep 95
- Hanks, Tom . . . . Jan 96
- Hart, Melissa Joan . . . . Jan 94
- Jones, James Earl . . . . Jan 95
- Lee, Spike . . . . Apr 92
- Locklear, Heather . . . . Jan 95
- O'Donnell, Rosie . . . . Apr 97
- Oleynik, Larisa . . . . Sep 96
- Olsen, Ashley . . . . Sep 95
- Olsen, Mary Kate . . . . Sep 95
- Perry, Luke . . . . Jan 92
- Phoenix, River . . . . Apr 94
- Priestley, Jason . . . . Apr 92
- Reeve, Christopher . . . . Jan 97
- Ryder, Winona . . . . Jan 93
- Shatner, William . . . . Apr 95
- Smith, Will . . . . Sep 94
- Stewart, Patrick . . . . Jan 94
- Thiessen, Tiffani-Amber . . . . Jan 96

Thomas, Jonathan Taylor .... Apr 95
Washington, Denzel .... Jan 93
Wayans, Keenen Ivory .... Jan 93
White, Jaleel .... Jan 96
Williams, Robin .... Apr 92
Wilson, Mara .... Jan 97
Winfrey, Oprah .... Apr 92

Afrikaners
de Klerk, F.W. .... Apr 94; Update 94

AIDS (acquired immunodeficiency syndrome)
Ashe, Arthur .... Sep 93
Johnson, Magic .... Apr 92
Krim, Mathilde .... Science 96
Nureyev, Rudolf .... Apr 93
Zamora, Pedro .... Apr 95

Air Force, U.S.
Morrison, Sam .... Sep 97

Algerian
Boulmerka, Hassiba .... Sport 96

Ambassador to the United Nations
Bush, George .... Jan 92

American Red Cross
Dole, Elizabeth Hanford . Jul 92; Update 96

amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS)
Hawking, Stephen .... Apr 92

ANC (African National Congress)
de Klerk, F.W. .... Apr 94; Update 94
Kaunda, Kenneth .... ModAfr 97
Mandela, Nelson .... Jan 92; Update 94
Mandela, Winnie .... ModAfr 97

Angolan
Savimbi, Jonas .... ModAfr 97

apartheid
de Klerk, F.W. .... Apr 94; Update 94
Mandela, Nelson .... Jan 92; Update 94
Mandela, Winnie .... ModAfr 97

Apple Computer
Jobs, Steven .... Jan 92

Aqua-lung
Cousteau, Jacques .... Jan 93

archaeology
Leakey, Louis .... Science 96
Leakey, Mary .... Science 96

architects
Lin, Maya .... Sep 97
Pei, I.M. .... Artist 96
Wright, Frank Lloyd .... Artist 96

Arizona, Governor of
Babbitt, Bruce .... Jan 94

Arkansas, Governor of
Clinton, Bill .... Jul 92

Army, U.S.
Abbey, Edward .... Env 97
Ashe, Arthur .... Sep 93
Asimov, Isaac .... Jul 92
Bearden, Romare .... Artist 96
Berenstain, Stan .... Author 96
Brower, David .... Env 97
Brown, Ron .... Sep 96
Carle, Eric .... Author 95
Dole, Bob .... Jan 96
Garcia, Jerry .... Jan 96
Gore, Al .... Jan 93
Ice-T .... Apr 93
Johns, Jasper .... Artist 96
Jones, James Earl .... Jan 95
Murie, Olaus J. .... Env 97
Myers, Walter Dean .... Jan 93
Paulsen, Gary .... Author 95
Peterson, Roger Tory .... Env 97
Powell, Colin .... Jan 92
Sabin, Albert .... Science 96
Salinger, J.D. .... Author 96
Scarry, Richard .... Sep 94
Schulz, Charles .... Author 96
Schwarzkopf, H. Norman .... Jan 92
Seuss, Dr. .... Jan 92
Thomas, Dave .... Apr 96
Vonnegut, Kurt, Jr. .... Author 95

artists
Bearden, Romare .... Artist 96
Calder, Alexander .... Artist 96
Chagall, Marc .... Artist 96
Christo .... Sep 96
Frankenthaler, Helen .... Artist 96
Johns, Jasper .... Artist 96
Lawrence, Jacob .... Artist 96
Moore, Henry .... Artist 96
Moses, Grandma .... Artist 96
Nevelson, Louise .... Artist 96
O'Keeffe, Georgia .... Artist 96
Pinkney, Jerry .... Author 96
Ringgold, Faith .... Author 96
Rivera, Diego .... Artist 96
Rockwell, Norman .... Artist 96
Warhol, Andy .... Artist 96

Asian-American
Chung, Connie .... Jan 94; Update 96
Guey, Wendy .... Sep 96
Lin, Maya .... Sep 97

Ma, Yo-Yo . . . Jul 92
Pei, I.M. . . . Artist 96
Woods, Tiger . . . Sport 96
Yamaguchi, Kristi . . . Apr 92

Associated Press
Anderson, Terry . . . Apr 92

astronauts
Jemison, Mae . . . Oct 92
Lovell, Jim . . . Jan 96
Ride, Sally . . . Jan 92

astronomer
Sagan, Carl . . . Science 96

athletes
Aaron, Hank . . . Sport 96
Abdul-Jabbar, Kareem . . . Sport 96
Agassi, Andre . . . Jul 92
Aikman, Troy . . . Apr 95
Allen, Marcus . . . Sep 97
Ashe, Arthur . . . Sep 93
Baiul, Oksana . . . Apr 95
Barkley, Charles . . . Apr 92
Bird, Larry . . . Jan 92
Blair, Bonnie . . . Apr 94
Boulmerka, Hassiba . . . Sport 96
Butcher, Susan . . . Sport 96
Daniel, Beth . . . Sport 96
Driscoll, Jean . . . Sep 97
Evans, Janet . . . Jan 95
Evert, Chris . . . Sport 96
Ewing, Patrick . . . Jan 95
Fedorov, Sergei . . . Apr 94; Update 94
Graf, Steffi . . . Jan 92
Gretzky, Wayne . . . Jan 92; Update 93
Griffey, Ken, Jr. . . . Sport 96
Griffith Joyner, Florence . . . Sport 96
Harding, Tonya . . . Sep 94
Hill, Grant . . . Sport 96
Jackson, Bo . . . Jan 92; Update 93
Jansen, Dan . . . Apr 94
Johnson, Magic . . . Apr 92
Johnson, Michael . . . Jan 97
Jordan, Michael . . . Jan 92; Update 93; Update 94; Update 95
Joyner-Kersee, Jackie . . . Oct 92; Update 96
Kerrigan, Nancy . . . Apr 94
Lalas, Alexi . . . Sep 94
Lemieux, Mario . . . Jul 92; Update 93
LeMond, Greg . . . Sport 96
Lewis, Carl . . . Sep 96
Mantle, Mickey . . . Jan 96
Marino, Dan . . . Apr 93
Messier, Mark . . . Apr 96
Miller, Shannon . . . Sep 94; Update 96
Montana, Joe . . . Jan 95; Update 95
Navratilova, Martina . . . Jan 93; Update 94
Ndeti, Cosmas . . . Sep 95
Olajuwon, Hakeem . . . Sep 95
O'Neal, Shaquille . . . Sep 93
Pelé . . . Sport 96
Pippen, Scottie . . . Oct 92
Pippig, Uta . . . Sport 96
Rice, Jerry . . . Apr 93
Ripken, Cal, Jr. . . . Sport 96
Robinson, David . . . Sep 96
Rodman, Dennis . . . Apr 96
Rose, Pete . . . Jan 92
Rudolph, Wilma . . . Apr 95
Ryan, Nolan . . . Oct 92; Update 93
Sampras, Pete . . . Jan 97
Sanchez Vicario, Arantxa . . . Sport 96
Sanders, Barry . . . Sep 95
Sanders, Deion . . . Sport 96
Seles, Monica . . . Jan 96
Smith, Emmitt . . . Sep 94
Ward, Charlie . . . Apr 94
Winfield, Dave . . . Jan 93
Woods, Tiger . . . Sport 96
Yamaguchi, Kristi . . . Apr 92
Zmeskal, Kim . . . Jan 94

Atlanta Braves
Aaron, Hank . . . Sport 96

Attorney General, U.S.
Reno, Janet . . . Sep 93

Australian
Norman, Greg . . . Jan 94
Travers, P.L. . . . Author 96

authors
Abbey, Edward . . . Env 97
Angelou, Maya . . . Apr 93
Asimov, Isaac . . . Jul 92
Avi . . . Jan 93
Baldwin, James . . . Author 96
Berenstain, Jan . . . Author 96
Berenstain, Stan . . . Author 96
Blume, Judy . . . Jan 92
Boyd, Candy Dawson . . . Author 97
Bradbury, Ray . . . Author 97
Brooks, Gwendolyn . . . Author 97
Brower, David . . . Env 97
Carle, Eric . . . Author 95
Carson, Rachel . . . Env 97

Carter, Jimmy . . . Apr 95
Childress, Alice . . . Author 95
Cleary, Beverly . . . Apr 94
Cormier, Robert . . . Author 95
Cosby, Bill . . . Jan 92
Dahl, Roald . . . Author 95
Douglas, Marjory Stoneman . . . Env 97
Dove, Rita . . . Jan 94
Duncan, Lois . . . Sep 93
Ellison, Ralph . . . Author 97
Filipovic, Zlata . . . Sep 94
Fitzhugh, Louise . . . Author 97
George, Jean Craighead . . . Author 97
Grisham, John . . . Author 95
Haley, Alex . . . Apr 92
Hamilton, Virginia . . . Author 95
Handford, Martin . . . Jan 92
Herriot, James . . . Author 95
Hinton, S.E. . . . Author 95
Iacocca, Lee A. . . . Jan 92
Kerr, M.E. . . . Author 95
King, Stephen . . . Author 95
Konigsburg, E.L. . . . Author 97
L'Engle, Madeleine . . . Jan 92
Lewis, C. S. . . . Author 97
Limbaugh, Rush . . . Sep 95
Lovell, Jim . . . Jan 96
Macaulay, David . . . Author 96
MacLachlan, Patricia . . . Author 96
Martin, Ann M. . . . Jan 92
McCully, Emily Arnold . . Jul 92; Update 93
McKissack, Fredrick L. . . . Author 97
McKissack, Patricia C. . . . Author 97
Morrison, Toni . . . Jan 94
Murie, Margaret . . . Env 97
Murie, Olaus J. . . . Env 97
Myers, Walter Dean . . . Jan 93; Update 94
Naylor, Phyllis Reynolds . . . Apr 93
Nixon, Joan Lowery . . . Author 95
Nixon, Richard . . . Sep 94
O'Dell, Scott . . . Author 96
Paterson, Katherine . . . Author 97
Paulsen, Gary . . . Author 95
Peterson, Roger Tory . . . Env 97
Pike, Christopher . . . Sep 96
Prelutsky, Jack . . . Author 96
Reid Banks, Lynne . . . Author 96
Rice, Anne . . . Author 97
Ringgold, Faith . . . Author 96
Rylant, Cynthia . . . Author 95
Salinger, J.D. . . . Author 96
Saro-Wiwa, Ken . . . Env 97
Scarry, Richard . . . Sep 94
Sendak, Maurice . . . Author 96
Senghor, Léopold Sédar . . . ModAfr 97
Seuss, Dr. . . . Jan 92
Silverstein, Shel . . . Author 97
Speare, Elizabeth George . . . Sep 95
Spinelli, Jerry . . . Apr 93
Spock, Benjamin . . . Sep 95
Steinem, Gloria . . . Oct 92
Stine, R.L. . . . Apr 94
Taylor, Mildred D. . . . Author 95
Thomas, Lewis . . . Apr 94
Travers, P.L. . . . Author 96
Van Allsburg, Chris . . . Apr 92
Voigt, Cynthia . . . Oct 92
Vonnegut, Kurt, Jr. . . . Author 95
White, E.B. . . . Author 95
Wilder, Laura Ingalls . . . Author 97
Williams, Garth . . . Author 96
Zindel, Paul . . . Author 95

autobiographies
Handford, Martin . . . Jan 92
Iacocca, Lee . . . Jan 92
L'Engle, Madeleine . . . Jan 92
Parkinson, Jennifer . . . Apr 95

automobile executive
Iacocca, Lee A. . . . Jan 92

automobile racer
Andretti, Mario . . . Sep 94

ballet
de Mille, Agnes . . . Jan 95
Jamison, Judith . . . Jan 96
Kistler, Darci . . . Jan 93
Nureyev, Rudolf . . . Apr 93

Baltimore Orioles
Ripken, Cal, Jr. . . . Sport 96

"Baseball"
Burns, Ken . . . Jan 95

baseball players
Aaron, Hank . . . Sport 96
Fielder, Cecil . . . Sep 93
Griffey, Ken, Jr. . . . Sport 96
Jackson, Bo . . . Jan 92; Update 93
Jordan, Michael . . . Update 94
Mantle, Mickey . . . Jan 96
Ripken, Cal, Jr. . . . Sport 96
Rose, Pete . . . Jan 92
Ryan, Nolan . . . Oct 92; Update 93
Sanders, Deion . . . Sport 96
Winfield, Dave . . . Jan 93

basketball players
Abdul-Jabbar, Kareem .... Sport 96
Barkley, Charles .... Apr 92
Bird, Larry .... Jan 92
Ewing, Patrick .... Jan 95
Hill, Grant .... Sport 96
Johnson, Magic .... Apr 92
Jordan, Michael .... Jan 92; Update 93; Update 94
Olajuwon, Hakeem .... Sep 95
O'Neal, Shaquille .... Sep 93
Pippen, Scottie .... Oct 92
Robinson, David .... Sep 96
Rodman, Dennis .... Apr 96
Ward, Charlie .... Apr 94
"Beverly Hills 90210"
Doherty, Shannen ..... Apr 92; Update 94
Garth, Jennie .... Apr 96
Perry, Luke .... Jan 92
Priestley, Jason .... Apr 92
Thiessen, Tiffani-Amber .... Jan 96
bicycle racer
LeMond, Greg .... Sport 96
biology
see also marine biology
molecular biology
neurobiology
primatology
scientists
Carson, Rachel .... Env 97
Margulis, Lynn .... Sep 96
McClintock, Barbara .... Oct 92
Ochoa, Severo .... Jan 94
Sabin, Albert .... Science 96
black
Aaron, Hank .... Sport 96
Abdul-Jabbar, Kareem .... Sport 96
Aidid, Mohammed Farah ..... ModAfr 97
Allen, Marcus .... Sep 97
Amin, Idi .... ModAfr 97
Anderson, Marian .... Jan 94
Angelou, Maya .... Apr 93
Aristide, Jean-Bertrand .... Jan 95
Ashe, Arthur .... Sep 93
Baldwin, James .... Author 96
Banda, Hastings Kamuzu ..... ModAfr 97
Battle, Kathleen .... Jan 93
Bearden, Romare .... Artist 96
Berry, Halle .... Jan 95
Boyd, Candy Dawson .... Author 97
Boyz II Men .... Jan 96
Bradley, Ed .... Apr 94
Brandy .... Apr 96
Brooks, Gwendolyn .... Author 97
Brown, Ron .... Sep 96
Champagne, Larry III .... Apr 96
Chavis, Benjamin ...... Jan 94; Update 94
Childress, Alice .... Author 95
Coolio .... Sep 96
Cosby, Bill .... Jan 92
Dove, Rita .... Jan 94
Edelman, Marian Wright .... Apr 93
Ellison, Ralph .... Author 97
Ewing, Patrick .... Jan 95
Farrakhan, Louis .... Jan 97
Fielder, Cecil .... Sep 93
Fitzgerald, Ella .... Jan 97
Gillespie, Dizzy .... Apr 93
Goldberg, Whoopi .... Apr 94
Griffey, Ken, Jr. .... Sport 96
Gumbel, Bryant .... Apr 97
Guy, Jasmine .... Sep 93
Haley, Alex .... Apr 92
Hamilton, Virginia .... Author 95
Hammer .... Jan 92
Hill, Anita .... Jan 93
Hill, Grant .... Sport 96
Houston, Whitney .... Sep 94
Ice-T .... Apr 93
Jackson, Bo .... Jan 92; Update 93
Jackson, Jesse .... Sep 95
Jamison, Judith .... Jan 96
Jemison, Mae .... Oct 92
Johnson, John .... Jan 97
Johnson, Magic .... Apr 92
Johnson, Michael .... Jan 97
Jones, James Earl .... Jan 95
Jordan, Barbara .... Apr 96
Jordan, Michael .... Jan 92; Update 93; Update 94; Update 95
Joyner-Kersee, Jackie ... Oct 92; Update 96
Kaunda, Kenneth .... ModAfr 97
Kenyatta, Jomo .... ModAfr 97
Lawrence, Jacob .... Artist 96
Lee, Spike .... Apr 92
Lewis, Carl .... Sep 96
Maathai, Wangari .... Env 97
Mandela, Nelson .... Jan 92; Update 94
Mandela, Winnie .... ModAfr 97
Marsalis, Wynton .... Apr 92
Marshall, Thurgood .... Jan 92; Update 93
McKissack, Fredrick L. .... Author 97

McKissack, Patricia C. .... Author 97
Mobutu Sese Seko .... ModAfr 97
Morrison, Sam .... Sep 97
Morrison, Toni .... Jan 94
Mugabe, Robert .... ModAfr 97
Myers, Walter Dean .... Jan 93; Update 94
Ndeti, Cosmas .... Sep 95
Nkrumah, Kwame .... ModAfr 97
Nyerere, Julius Kambarage .... ModAfr 97
Olajuwon, Hakeem .... Sep 95
Oliver, Patsy Ruth .... Env 97
O'Neal, Shaquille................ Sep 93
Parks, Gordon.................. Artist 96
Parks, Rosa .... Apr 92; Update 94
Pelé.......................... Sport 96
Pinkney, Jerry................ Author 96
Pippen, Scottie .... Oct 92
Powell, Colin Jan 92; Update 93; Update 95
Queen Latifah .... Apr 92
Rice, Jerry .... Apr 93
Ringgold, Faith................ Author 96
Robinson, David .... Sep 96
Rodman, Dennis .... Apr 96
Rudolph, Wilma.................. Apr 95
Salt 'N' Pepa.................... Apr 95
Sanders, Barry .... Sep 95
Sanders, Deion .... Sport 96
Saro-Wiwa, Ken .... Env 97
Savimbi, Jonas .... ModAfr 97
Senghor, Léopold Sédar ...... ModAfr 97
Shakur, Tupac.................... Apr 97
Smith, Emmitt .... Sep 94
Smith, Will .... Sep 94
Tarvin, Herbert .... Apr 97
Taylor, Mildred D. .... Author 95
Thomas, Clarence .... Jan 92
Tubman, William V. S. .... ModAfr 97
Ward, Charlie.................... Apr 94
Washington, Denzel............... Jan 93
Wayans, Keenen Ivory .... Jan 93
White, Jaleel .... Jan 96
Winfield, Dave .... Jan 93
Winfrey, Oprah .... Apr 92
Woods, Tiger.................. Sport 96

"Blossom"
Bialik, Mayim .... Jan 94

Bosnian
Filipovic, Zlata .... Sep 94

Boston Celtics
Bird, Larry .... Jan 92

Boy Scouts
Anderson, Terry.................. Apr 92
Lovell, Jim .... Jan 96
Perot, H. Ross.................... Apr 92
Spielberg, Steven .... Jan 94

Brazilian
Mendes, Chico.................... Env 97
Pelé.......................... Sport 96

Bulgarian
Christo .... Sep 96

Burmese
Aung San Suu Kyi .... Apr 96

business
Brown, Ron...................... Sep 96
Fields, Debbi .... Jan 96
Gates, Bill .... Apr 93
Iacocca, Lee A. .... Jan 92
Jobs, Steven...................... Jan 92
Johnson, John .... Jan 97
Land, Edwin.................. Science 96
Perot, H. Ross......... Apr 92; Update 93
Thomas, Dave .... Apr 96

Calvin and Hobbes
Watterson, Bill.................... Jan 92

Camp Fire Girls
Cleary, Beverly .... Apr 94

Canadian
Blanchard, Rachel................ Apr 97
Candy, John .... Sep 94
Carrey, Jim .... Apr 96
Dion, Celine .... Sep 97
Gretzky, Wayne .... Jan 92; Update 93
Jennings, Peter.................... Jul 92
lang, k.d. .... Sep 93
Lemieux, Mario .... Jul 92; Update 93
Messier, Mark .... Apr 96
Morissette, Alanis................ Apr 97
Priestley, Jason.................. Apr 92
Shatner, William .... Apr 95
Watson, Paul .... Env 97

cardiology
Healy, Bernadine............. Science 96

cartoonists
Breathed, Berke.................. Jan 92
Davis, Jim .... Author 95
Groening, Matt .... Jan 92
Guisewite, Cathy .... Sep 93
Larson, Gary................. Author 95
Schulz, Charles............... Author 96
Watterson, Bill.................... Jan 92

Cathy
Guisewite, Cathy . . . . Sep 93
"CBS Evening News"
Chung, Connie . . . . Jan 94; Update 95
Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff
Powell, Colin . . . . Jan 92; Update 93
"Cheers"
Alley, Kirstie . . . . Jul 92
Cherokee
Mankiller, Wilma . . . . Apr 94
Chicago Bulls
Jordan, Michael . . . . Jan 92; Update 93; Update 94; Update 95
Pippen, Scottie . . . . Oct 92
Rodman, Dennis . . . . Apr 96
Chicago White Sox
Jackson, Bo . . . . Jan 92; Update 93
Children's Defense Fund (CDF)
Edelman, Marian Wright . . . . Apr 93
Chinese
Pei, I.M. . . . . Artist 96
choreographers
Abdul, Paula . . . . Jan 92
de Mille, Agnes . . . . Jan 95
Jamison, Judith . . . . Jan 96
Nureyev, Rudolf . . . . Apr 93
Chrysler Corporation
Iacocca, Lee A. . . . . Jan 92
CIA, director of the
Bush, George . . . . Jan 92
Citizens Clearinghouse for Hazardous Wastes
Gibbs, Lois . . . . Env 97
Civil Rights Movement
Chavis, Benjamin . . . . . . Jan 94; Update 94
Edelman, Marian Wright . . . . Apr 93
Jackson, Jesse . . . . Sep 95
Marshall, Thurgood . . . . Jan 92; Update 93
Parks, Rosa . . . . Apr 92
"The Civil War"
Burns, Ken . . . . Jan 95
"Clarissa Explains It All"
Hart, Melissa Joan . . . . Jan 94
clergy
Aristide, Jean-Bertrand . . . . Jan 95
Chavis, Benjamin . . . . . . Jan 94; Update 94
Jackson, Jesse . . . . Sep 95
Pope John Paul II . . . . . Oct 92; Update 94; Update 95
"Clueless"
Blanchard, Rachel . . . . Apr 97
Coast Guard, U.S.
Haley, Alex . . . . Apr 92
Lawrence, Jacob . . . . Artist 96
comedians
Allen, Tim . . . . Apr 94
Arnold, Roseanne . . . . Oct 92
Candy, John . . . . Sep 94
Carrey, Jim . . . . Apr 96
Carvey, Dana . . . . Jan 93
Cosby, Bill . . . . Jan 92
Goldberg, Whoopi . . . . Apr 94
Leno, Jay . . . . Jul 92
Letterman, David . . . . Jan 95
O'Donnell, Rosie . . . . Apr 97
Seinfeld, Jerry . . . . Oct 92
Wayans, Keenen Ivory . . . . Jan 93
Williams, Robin . . . . Apr 92
Communists
Castro, Fidel . . . . Jul 92; Update 94
Gorbachev, Mikhail . . . . Jan 92
Yeltsin, Boris Apr 92; Update 93; Update 95
computers
Gates, Bill . . . . Apr 93
Jobs, Steven . . . . Jan 92
Perot, H. Ross . . . . Apr 92
Conservational International
Mittermeier, Russell A. . . . . Env 97
cookies
Fields, Debbi . . . . Jan 96
"Cosby Show, The"
Cosby, Bill . . . . Jan 92
cosmology
Hawking, Stephen . . . . Apr 92
"Cosmos"
Sagan, Carl . . . . Science 96
Cousteau Society
Cousteau, Jacques . . . . Jan 93
Cuba, president of
Castro, Fidel . . . . Jul 92; Update 94
Cuban
Castro, Fidel . . . . Jul 92; Update 94
Cuban-American
see also Hispanic-American
Estefan, Gloria . . . . Jul 92
Fuentes, Daisy . . . . Jan 94
Zamora, Pedro . . . . Apr 95
Cuban Revolution
Castro, Fidel . . . . Jul 92; Update 94
cyclist
LeMond, Greg . . . . Sport 96

Czechoslovakian
Navratilova, Martina. . . . Jan 93; Update 94
Dallas Cowboys
Aikman, Troy . . . . Apr 95
Sanders, Deion . . . . Sport 96
Smith, Emmitt . . . . Sep 94
dancers
Abdul, Paula . . . . Jan 92
de Mille, Agnes . . . . Jan 95
Estefan, Gloria . . . . Jul 92
Hammer . . . . Jan 92
Jamison, Judith . . . . Jan 96
Kistler, Darci . . . . Jan 93
Nureyev, Rudolf. . . . . Apr 93
Democratic National Committee, chairman
Brown, Ron. Sep 96
Democratic Party
Carter, Jimmy . . . . Apr 95
Clinton, Bill. . . . . Jul 92
Gore, Al . . . . Jan 93
deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA)
Watson, James D. . . . . Science 96
Desert Shield/Desert Storm commander
Schwarzkopf, H. Norman . . . . Jan 92
Detroit Lions
Sanders, Barry . . . . Sep 95
Detroit Pistons
Hill, Grant . . . . Sport 96
Detroit Red Wings
Fedorov, Sergei. . . . . Apr 94; Update 94
Detroit Tigers
Fielder, Cecil. . . . . Sep 93
"A Different World"
Guy, Jasmine . . . . Sep 93
dinosaurs
Horner, Jack. . . . . Science 96
diplomats
Boutros-Ghali, Boutros . . . . Apr 93
directors
Burns, Ken. . . . . Jan 95
Lee, Spike . . . . Oct 92
Lucas, George . . . . Apr 97
Parks, Gordon . . . . Artist 96
Spielberg, Steven . . . . . . Jan 94; Update 94; Update 95
Warhol, Andy. . . . . Artist 96
Wayans, Keenen Ivory . . . . Jan 93
disabled
Dole, Bob. . . . . Jan 96
Driscoll, Jean . . . . Sep 97
Hawking, Stephen. . . . . Apr 92
Jordan, Barbara . . . . Apr 96
Perlman, Itzhak. . . . . Jan 95
Reeve, Christopher. . . . . Jan 97
Whitestone, Heather. . . . . Apr 95
DNA
see deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA)
doctors
Banda, Hastings Kamuzu . . . . . ModAfr 97
Healy, Bernadine. . . . . Science 96
Jemison, Mae . . . . Oct 92
Novello, Antonia . . . . Apr 92
Pippig, Uta. Sport 96
Sabin, Albert . . . . Science 96
Salk, Jonas . . . . Jan 94; Update 95
Spock, Benjamin . . . . Sep 95
Down's Syndrome
Burke, Chris . . . . Sep 93
Earth First!
Foreman, Dave. . . . . Env 97
Earth Island Institute
Brower, David . . . . Env 97
Edmonton Oilers
Gretzky, Wayne . . . . Jan 92
EDS (Electronic Data Systems)
Perot, H. Ross. . . . . Apr 92
Egypt, president of
Sadat, Anwar . . . . ModAfr 97
Egyptian
Boutros-Ghali, Boutros . . . . Apr 93
Sadat, Anwar . . . . ModAfr 97
English
Dahl, Roald. . . . . Author 95
Diana, Princess of Wales. Jul 92; Update 96
Goodall, Jane . . . . Science 96
Handford, Martin . . . . Jan 92
Hargreaves, Alison . . . . Jan 96
Hawking, Stephen. . . . . Apr 92
Herriot, James . . . . Author 95
Leakey, Louis. . . . . Science 96
Leakey, Mary . . . . Science 96
Lewis, C. S. . . . . Author 97
Macaulay, David . . . . Author 96
Moore, Henry . . . . Artist 96
Reid Banks, Lynne. . . . . Author 96
Stewart, Patrick. . . . . Jan 94
environmentalists
Abbey, Edward. . . . . Env 97
Adams, Ansel . . . . Artist 96
Askins, Renee. . . . . Env 97

Babbitt, Bruce . . . . Jan 94
Brower, David . . . . Env 97
Carson, Rachel . . . . Env 97
Cousteau, Jacques . . . . Jan 93
Douglas, Marjory Stoneman . . . . . . Env 97
Earle, Sylvia . . . . Science 96
Foreman, Dave . . . . Env 97
Gibbs, Lois . . . . Env 97
Gore, Al . . . . Jan 93
Maathai, Wangari . . . . Env 97
Mendes, Chico . . . . Env 97
Mittermeier, Russell A. . . . . Env 97
Murie, Margaret . . . . Env 97
Murie, Olaus J. . . . . Env 97
Oliver, Patsy Ruth . . . . Env 97
Peterson, Roger Tory . . . . Env 97
Saro-Wiwa, Ken . . . . Env 97
Watson, Paul . . . . Env 97
Werbach, Adam . . . . Env 97

Ethiopia, emperor of
Haile Selassie . . . . ModAfr 97

Ethiopian
Haile Selassie . . . . ModAfr 97

ethnologist
Goodall, Jane . . . . Science 96

"Eye to Eye with Connie Chung"
Chung, Connie . . . . Jan 94; Update 95

"Family Matters"
White, Jaleel . . . . Jan 96

Far Side, The
Larson, Gary . . . . Author 95

female
Abdul, Paula . . . . Jan 92
Albright, Madeleine . . . . Apr 97
Alley, Kirstie . . . . Jul 92
Anderson, Gillian . . . . Jan 97
Anderson, Marian . . . . Jan 94
Angelou, Maya . . . . Apr 93
Arnold, Roseanne . . . . Oct 92
Askins, Renee . . . . Env 97
Aung San Suu Kyi . . . . Apr 96
Baiul, Oksana . . . . Apr 95
Battle, Kathleen . . . . Jan 93
Berenstain, Jan . . . . Author 96
Bergen, Candice . . . . Sep 93
Berry, Halle . . . . Jan 95
Bhutto, Benazir . . . . Apr 95
Bialik, Mayim . . . . Jan 94
Blair, Bonnie . . . . Apr 94; Update 95
Blanchard, Rachel . . . . Apr 97
Blume, Judy . . . . Jan 92
Boulmerka, Hassiba . . . . Sport 96
Bourke-White, Margaret . . . . Artist 96
Boyd, Candy Dawson . . . . Author 97
Brandy . . . . Apr 96
Brooks, Gwendolyn . . . . Author 97
Bush, Barbara . . . . Jan 92
Butcher, Susan . . . . Sport 96
Cameron, Candace . . . . Apr 95
Carey, Mariah . . . . Apr 96
Carpenter, Mary Chapin . . . . Sep 94
Carson, Rachel . . . . Env 97
Childress, Alice . . . . Author 95
Chung, Connie . . . . Jan 94; Update 95; Update 96
Cleary, Beverly . . . . Apr 94
Clinton, Chelsea . . . . Apr 96
Clinton, Hillary Rodham . . . . Apr 93; Update 94; Update 95; Update 96
Crawford, Cindy . . . . Apr 93
Danes, Claire . . . . Sep 97
Daniel, Beth . . . . Sport 96
de Mille, Agnes . . . . Jan 95
Diana, Princess of Wales . Jul 92; Update 96
Dion, Celine . . . . Sep 97
Doherty, Shannen . . . . . Apr 92; Update 94
Dole, Elizabeth Hanford . Jul 92; Update 96
Douglas, Marjory Stoneman . . . . . . Env 97
Dove, Rita . . . . Jan 94
Driscoll, Jean . . . . Sep 97
Duncan, Lois . . . . Sep 93
Earle, Sylvia . . . . Science 96
Edelman, Marian Wright . . . . Apr 93
Ellerbee, Linda . . . . Apr 94
Estefan, Gloria . . . . Jul 92
Evans, Janet . . . . Jan 95; Update 96
Evert, Chris . . . . Sport 96
Fields, Debbi . . . . Jan 96
Filipovic, Zlata . . . . Sep 94
Fitzgerald, Ella . . . . Jan 97
Fitzhugh, Louise . . . . Author 97
Fossey, Dian . . . . Science 96
Frankenthaler, Helen . . . . Artist 96
Fuentes, Daisy . . . . Jan 94
Garth, Jennie . . . . Apr 96
George, Jean Craighead . . . . Author 97
Gibbs, Lois . . . . Env 97
Gilbert, Sara . . . . Apr 93
Ginsburg, Ruth Bader . . . . Jan 94
Goldberg, Whoopi . . . . Apr 94

Goodall, Jane ... Science 96
Graf, Steffi ... Jan 92
Grant, Amy ... Jan 95
Griffith Joyner, Florence ... Sport 96
Guey, Wendy ... Sep 96
Guisewite, Cathy ... Sep 93
Guy, Jasmine ... Sep 93
Hamilton, Virginia ... Author 95
Harding, Tonya ... Sep 94
Hargreaves, Alison ... Jan 96
Hart, Melissa Joan ... Jan 94
Healy, Bernadine ... Science 96
Hill, Anita ... Jan 93
Hinton, S.E. ... Author 95
Houston, Whitney ... Sep 94
Jamison, Judith ... Jan 96
Jemison, Mae ... Oct 92
Jordan, Barbara ... Apr 96
Joyner-Kersee, Jackie ... Oct 92; Update 96
Kerr, M.E. ... Author 95
Kerrigan, Nancy ... Apr 94
Kistler, Darci ... Jan 93
Konigsburg, E.L. ... Author 97
Krim, Mathilde ... Science 96
Krone, Julie ... Jan 95
lang, k.d. ... Sep 93
Leakey, Mary ... Science 96
Leibovitz, Annie ... Sep 96
L'Engle, Madeleine ... Jan 92
Levi-Montalcini, Rita ... Science 96
Lin, Maya ... Sep 97
Locklear, Heather ... Jan 95
Lopez, Charlotte ... Apr 94
Maathai, Wangari ... Env 97
MacLachlan, Patricia ... Author 96
Mandela, Winnie ... ModAfr 97
Mankiller, Wilma ... Apr 94
Margulis, Lynn ... Sep 96
McClintock, Barbara ... Oct 92
McCully, Emily Arnold ... Jul 92; Update 93
McEntire, Reba ... Sep 95
McKissack, Patricia C. ... Author 97
Menchu, Rigoberta ... Jan 93
Miller, Shannon ... Sep 94
Morissette, Alanis ... Apr 97
Morrison, Toni ... Jan 94
Moses, Grandma ... Artist 96
Murie, Margaret ... Env 97
Navratilova, Martina ... Jan 93; Update 94
Naylor, Phyllis Reynolds ... Apr 93
Nevelson, Louise ... Artist 96
Nixon, Joan Lowery ... Author 95
Novello, Antonia ... Apr 92; Update 93
O'Connor, Sandra Day ... Jul 92
O'Donnell, Rosie ... Apr 97
O'Keeffe, Georgia ... Artist 96
Oleynik, Larisa ... Sep 96
Oliver, Patsy Ruth ... Env 97
Olsen, Ashley ... Sep 95
Olsen, Mary-Kate ... Sep 95
Parks, Rosa ... Apr 92; Update 94
Paterson, Katherine ... Author 97
Pauley, Jane ... Oct 92
Pippig, Uta ... Sport 96
Queen Latifah ... Apr 92
Reid Banks, Lynne ... Author 96
Reno, Janet ... Sep 93
Rice, Anne ... Author 97
Ride, Sally ... Jan 92
Ringgold, Faith ... Author 96
Roberts, Cokie ... Apr 95
Robinson, Mary ... Sep 93
Rudolph, Wilma ... Apr 95
Ryder, Winona ... Jan 93
Rylant, Cynthia ... Author 95
Salt 'N' Pepa ... Apr 95
Sanchez Vicario, Arantxa ... Sport 96
Schroeder, Pat ... Jan 97
Sealfon, Rebecca ... Sep 97
Selena ... Jan 96
Seles, Monica ... Jan 96
Soren, Tabitha ... Jan 97
Speare, Elizabeth George ... Sep 95
Steinem, Gloria ... Oct 92
Taylor, Mildred D. ... Author 95
Thiessen, Tiffani-Amber ... Jan 96
Travers, P.L. ... Author 96
Van Meter, Vicki ... Jan 95
Voigt, Cynthia ... Oct 92
Walters, Barbara ... Sep 94
Whitestone, Heather ... Apr 95
Wilder, Laura Ingalls ... Author 97
Wilson, Mara ... Jan 97
Winfrey, Oprah ... Apr 92
Yamaguchi, Kristi ... Apr 92
Zmeskal, Kim ... Jan 94

First Lady of the United States
Bush, Barbara ... Jan 92
Clinton, Hillary Rodham ... Apr 93; Update 94; Update 95; Update 96

football coaches
Madden, John . . . . Sep 97
Shula, Don . . . . Apr 96
football players
Aikman, Troy . . . . Apr 95
Allen, Marcus . . . . Sep 97
Jackson, Bo. . . . . Jan 92; Update 93
Marino, Dan . . . . Apr 93
Montana, Joe . . . . Jan 95; Update 95
Rice, Jerry . . . . Apr 93
Sanders, Barry . . . . Sep 95
Sanders, Deion . . . . Sport 96
Smith, Emmitt . . . . Sep 94
Ward, Charlie . . . . Apr 94
Young, Steve . . . . Jan 94
foster children
Lopez, Charlotte . . . . Apr 94
French
Cousteau, Jacques. . . . . Jan 93
"Fresh Prince of Bel-Air"
Smith, Will . . . . Sep 94
Friends of the Earth
Brower, David . . . . Env 97
"Full House"
Cameron, Candace . . . . Apr 95
Olsen, Ashley. . . . . Sep 95
Olsen, Mary Kate. . . . . Sep 95
Garfield
Davis, Jim . . . . Author 95
general, U.S. Army
Powell, Colin . . . . Jan 92; Update 93
Schwarzkopf, H. Norman . . . . Jan 92
genetics
Krim, Mathilde . . . . Science 96
McClintock, Barbara . . . . Oct 92
Ochoa, Severo. . . . . Jan 94
Georgia, Governor of
Carter, Jimmy. . . . . Apr 95
German
Graf, Steffi . . . . Jan 92
Pippig, Uta. Sport 96
Ghana, president of
Nkrumah, Kwame . . . . ModAfr 97
Ghanaian
Nkrumah, Kwame . . . . ModAfr 97
Girl Scouts
Clinton, Hillary Rodham. . . . . Apr 93
golfers
Daniel, Beth. . . . . Sport 96
Norman, Greg. . . . . Jan 94
Woods, Tiger . . . . Sport 96
Governor of Arizona
Babbitt, Bruce . . . . Jan 94
Governor of Arkansas
Clinton, Bill. . . . . Jul 92
Governor of Georgia
Carter, Jimmy. . . . . Apr 95
"grand slam" of tennis, winner
Evert, Chris . . . . Sport 96
Graf, Steffi . . . . Jan 92
Navratilova, Martina. . . . Jan 93; Update 94
Sampras, Pete . . . . Jan 97
Grateful Dead
Garcia, Jerry. . . . . Jan 96
Green Belt Movement
Maathai, Wangari . . . . Env 97
Guatemalan
Menchu, Rigoberta. . . . . Jan 93
gymnasts
Miller, Shannon . . . . Sep 94; Update 96
Zmeskal, Kim . . . . Jan 94
Haiti, president of
Aritide, Jean-Betrand . . . . Jan 95
Haitian
Aristide, Jean-Bertrand . . . . Jan 95
Harpo Productions
Winfrey, Oprah . . . . Apr 92
Heisman Trophy
Allen, Marcus . . . . Sep 97
Jackson, Bo . . . . Jan 92
Ward, Charlie. . . . . Apr 94
heptathlon
Joyner-Kersee, Jackie. . . . . Oct 92
Hispanic-American
Chavez, Cesar. . . . . Sep 93
Cisneros, Henry . . . . Sep 93
Estefan, Gloria . . . . Jul 92
Fuentes, Daisy. . . . . Jan 94
Lopez, Charlotte . . . . Apr 94
Novello, Antonia . . . . Apr 92
Ochoa, Severo. . . . . Jan 94
Selena . . . . Jan 96
Zamora, Pedro . . . . Apr 95
hockey players
Fedorov, Sergei. . . . . Apr 94; Update 94
Gretzky, Wayne . . . . Jan 92; Update 93
Lemieux, Mario . . . . Jul 92; Update 93
Messier, Mark . . . . Apr 96
Hodgkin's disease
Lemieux, Mario . . . . Update 93

"Home Improvement"
Allen, Tim . . . . Apr 94
Bryan, Zachery Ty . . . . Jan 97
Thomas, Jonathan Taylor . . . . Apr 95
horse racing
Krone, Julie . . . . Jan 95
hostages
Anderson, Terry . . . . Apr 92
Houston Rockets
Olajuwon, Hakeem . . . . Sep 95
Hungarian
Seles, Monica . . . . Jan 96
illustrators
Berenstain, Jan . . . . Author 96
Berenstain, Stan . . . . Author 96
Carle, Eric . . . . Author 95
Fitzhugh, Louise . . . . Author 97
George, Jean Craighead . . . . Author 97
Handford, Martin . . . . Jan 92
Konigsburg, E.L. . . . . Author 97
Macaulay, David . . . . Author 96
McCully, Emily Arnold . Apr 92; Update 93
Pinkney, Jerry . . . . Author 96
Ringgold, Faith . . . . Author 96
Rockwell, Norman . . . . Artist 96
Scarry, Richard . . . . Sep 94
Sendak, Maurice . . . . Author 96
Seuss, Dr. . . . . Jan 92
Silverstein, Shel . . . . Author 97
Van Allsburg, Chris . . . . Apr 92
Williams, Garth . . . . Author 96
"In Living Color"
Wayans, Keenen Ivory . . . . Jan 93
inventors
Cousteau, Jacques . . . . Jan 93
Land, Edwin . . . . Science 96
Iraq, President of
Hussein, Saddam . . . . Jul 92; Update 96
Iraqi
Hussein, Saddam . . . . Jul 92; Update 96
Ireland, President of
Robinson, Mary . . . . Sep 93
Irish
Lewis, C. S. . . . . Author 97
Robinson, Mary . . . . Sep 93
Israel, Prime Minister of
Rabin, Yitzhak . . . . Oct 92; Update 93; Update 94
Israeli
Perlman, Itzhak . . . . Jan 95
Rabin, Yitzhak . . . . Oct 92; Update 93; Update 94; Update 95
Italian
Andretti, Mario . . . . Sep 94
Krim, Mathilde . . . . Science 96
Levi-Montalcini, Rita . . . . Science 96
Jamaican
Denton, Sandi
see Salt 'N' Pepa . . . . Apr 95
Ewing, Patrick . . . . Jan 95
jockey
Krone, Julie . . . . Jan 95
Johnson Publishing Company
Johnson, John . . . . Jan 97
Joint Chiefs of Staff, Chairman of
Powell, Colin . . . . Jan 92; Update 93
journalists
Anderson, Terry . . . . Apr 92
Bradley, Ed . . . . Apr 94
Chung, Connie . . . . Jan 94; Update 95; Update 96
Ellerbee, Linda . . . . Apr 94
Jennings, Peter . . . . Jul 92
Pauley, Jane . . . . Oct 92
Roberts, Cokie . . . . Apr 95
Soren, Tabitha . . . . Jan 97
Walters, Barbara . . . . Sep 94
Jurassic Park
Spielberg, Steven . . . . . . Jan 94; Update 94
justices, United States Supreme Court
Burger, Warren . . . . Sep 95
Ginsburg, Ruth Bader . . . . Jan 94
Marshall, Thurgood . . . . Jan 92; Update 93
O'Connor, Sandra Day . . . . Jul 92
Thomas, Clarence . . . . Jan 92
Kansas City Chiefs
Allen, Marcus . . . . Sep 97
Montana, Joe . . . . Jan 95
Kansas City Royals
Jackson, Bo . . . . Jan 92
Kenya, president of
Kenyatta, Jomo . . . . ModAfr 97
Kenyan
Kenyatta, Jomo . . . . ModAfr 97
Maathai, Wangari . . . . Env 97
Ndeti, Cosmas . . . . Sep 95
Kenyan African National Union (Kenya)
Kenyatta, Jomo . . . . ModAfr 97
Ku Klux Klan
Duke, David . . . . Apr 92
Labor Party (Israel)
Rabin, Yitzhak . . . . Oct 92; Update 93; Update 94

176

Laker Girl
  Abdul, Paula . . . . Jan 92
"Late Show with David Letterman"
  Letterman, David . . . . Jan 95
lawyers
  Babbitt, Bruce . . . . Jan 94
  Boutros-Ghali, Boutros . . . . Apr 93
  Clinton, Hillary Rodham . . . . Apr 93
  Grisham, John . . . . Author 95
  Reno, Janet . . . . Sep 93
  Schroeder, Pat . . . . Jan 97
League of Conservation Voters
  Brower, David . . . . Env 97
Liberia, president of
  Tubman, William V. S. . . . . ModAfr 97
Liberian
  Tubman, William V. S. . . . . ModAfr 97
librarians
  Avi . . . . Jan 93
  Cleary, Beverly . . . . Apr 94
  Morrison, Sam . . . . Sep 97
Libyan
  Qaddafi, Muammar . . . . Apr 97
"Life Goes On"
  Burke, Chris . . . . Sep 93
literacy, promotion of
  Bush, Barbara . . . . Jan 92
Los Angeles Kings
  Gretzky, Wayne . . . . Jan 92; Update 93
Los Angeles Lakers
  Abdul-Jabbar, Kareem . . . . Sport 96
  Johnson, Magic . . . . Apr 92
Los Angeles Raiders
  Jackson, Bo . . . . Jan 92; Update 93
Lou Gehrig's disease
  see amyotrophic lateral sclerosis
Malawi, president of
  Banda, Hastings Kamuzu . . . . ModAfr 97
Malawian
  Banda, Hastings Kamuzu . . . . ModAfr 97
marine botany
  Earle, Sylvia . . . . Science 96
Marine Corps
  Anderson, Terry . . . . Apr 92
  Baker, James . . . . Oct 92
  Foreman, Dave . . . . Env 97
  Horner, Jack . . . . Science 96
  McKissack, Fredrick L. . . . . Author 97
"Melrose Place"
  Locklear, Heather . . . . Jan 95
Merchant Marines
  Ellison, Ralph . . . . Author 97
Mexican
  Rivera, Diego . . . . Artist 96
Miami Dolphins
  Marino, Dan . . . . Apr 93
  Shula, Don . . . . Apr 96
Microsoft Corp.
  Gates, Bill . . . . Apr 93
military service
– **Egypt**
  Sadat, Anwar . . . . ModAfr 97
– **England**
  Dahl, Roald . . . . Author 95
  Lewis, C. S. . . . . Author 97
  Moore, Henry . . . . Artist 96
– **France**
  Cousteau, Jacques . . . . Jan 93
  Senghor, Léopold Sédar . . . . ModAfr 97
– **Germany**
  Pippig, Uta . . . . Sport 96
– **Israel**
  Rabin, Yitzhak . . . . Oct 92
– **Liberia**
  Tubman, William V. S. . . . . ModAfr 97
– **Libya**
  Qaddafi, Muammar . . . . Apr 97
– **Somalia**
  Aidid, Mohammed Farah . . . . ModAfr 97
– **New Zealand**
  Hillary, Sir Edmund . . . . Sep 96
– **Uganda**
  Amin, Idi . . . . ModAfr 97
– **U.S.**
  Air Force
    Morrison, Sam . . . . Sep 97
  Army
    Abbey, Edward . . . . Env 97
    Ashe, Arthur . . . . Sep 93
    Asimov, Isaac . . . . Jul 92
    Bearden, Romare . . . . Artist 96
    Berenstain, Stan . . . . Author 96
    Brower, David . . . . Env 97
    Brown, Ron . . . . Sep 96
    Carle, Eric . . . . Author 95
    Dole, Bob . . . . Jan 96
    Garcia, Jerry . . . . Jan 96
    Gore, Al . . . . Jan 93
    Ice-T . . . . Apr 93
    Johns, Jasper . . . . Artist 96

Jones, James Earl . . . . Jan 95
Murie, Olaus J. . . . . Env 97
Myers, Walter Dean . . . . Jan 93
Paulsen, Gary . . . . Author 95
Peterson, Roger Tory . . . . Env 97
Powell, Colin . . . . Jan 92; Update 93
Sabin, Albert. . . . . Science 96
Salinger, J.D. . . . . Author 96
Scarry, Richard . . . . Sep 94
Schulz, Charles . . . . Author 96
Schwarzkopf, H. Norman. . . . . Jan 92
Seuss, Dr. Jan 92
Thomas, Dave. . . . . Apr 96
Vonnegut, Kurt, Jr. . . . . Author 95
Coast Guard
Haley, Alex . . . . Apr 92
Lawrence, Jacob. . . . . Artist 96
Marine Corps
Anderson, Terry . . . . Apr 92
Baker, James . . . . Oct 92
Foreman, Dave . . . . Env 97
Horner, Jack . . . . Science 96
McKissack, Fredrick L. . . . . Author 97
Navy
Bush, George . . . . Jan 92
Carter, Jimmy . . . . Apr 95
Chavez, Cesar . . . . Sep 93
Cosby, Bill. . . . . Jan 92
Lovell, Jim . . . . Jan 96
Nixon, Richard . . . . Sep 94
Perot, H. Ross . . . . Apr 92
Robinson, David . . . . Sep 96
Rockwell, Norman. . . . . Artist 96
Spinelli, Jerry. . . . . Apr 93
Spock, Benjamin. . . . . Sep 95
Zaire
Mobutu Sese Seko . . . . ModAfr 97
Minnesota Twins
Winfield, Dave . . . . Jan 93
Miss America
Whitestone, Heather . . . . Apr 95
Miss Teen USA
Lopez, Charlotte . . . . Apr 94
models (professional)
Crawford, Cindy . . . . Apr 93
"Moesha"
Brandy. . . . . Apr 96
molecular biology
Watson, James D. . . . . Science 96
Moroccan
Hassan II . . . . ModAfr 97
Morocco, king of
Hassan II . . . . ModAfr 97
"Mork and Mindy"
Williams, Robin . . . . Jul 92
mountaineer
Hargreaves, Alison . . . . Jan 96
Hillary, Sir Edmund. . . . . Sep 96
movies
see directors
producers
Mrs. Fields Cookies
Fields, Debbi . . . . Jan 96
***Ms.* magazine**
Steinem, Gloria . . . . Oct 92
MTV
Crawford, Cindy . . . . Apr 93
Fuentes, Daisy. . . . . Jan 94
Soren, Tabitha. . . . . Jan 97
Zamora, Pedro . . . . Apr 95
"Murphy Brown"
Bergen, Candice. . . . . Sep 93
musicians
Garcia, Jerry. Jan 96
Gillespie, Dizzy . . . . Apr 93
Ma, Yo-Yo . . . . Jul 92
Marsalis, Wynton. . . . . Apr 92
Monroe, Bill. . . . . Sep 97
Perlman, Itzhak. . . . . Jan 95
NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People)
Angelou, Maya. . . . . Apr 93
Chavis, Benjamin . . . . . . Jan 94; Update 94
Marshall, Thurgood . . . . Jan 92
Parks, Rosa . . . . Apr 92
NAAWP (National Association for the Advancement of White People)
Duke, David . . . . Apr 92
Nation of Islam
Farrakhan, Louis. . . . . Jan 97
National Geography Bee
Galeczka, Chris . . . . Apr 96
National Party (South Africa)
de Klerk, F.W. . . . . Apr 94; Update 94
National Institutes of Health, U.S.
Healy, Bernadine . . . . Science 96
native peoples
Mankiller, Wilma. . . . . Apr 94
Menchu, Rigoberta . . . . Jan 93
Navy, U.S.
Bush, George. . . . . Jan 92
Carter, Jimmy. . . . . Apr 95

Chavez, Cesar . . . . Sep 93
Cosby, Bill . . . . Jan 92
Lovell, Jim . . . . Jan 96
Nixon, Richard . . . . Sep 94
Perot, H. Ross. . . . . Apr 92
Robinson, David . . . . Sep 96
Rockwell, Norman . . . . Artist 96
Spinelli, Jerry . . . . Apr 93
Spock, Benjamin . . . . Sep 95
Nazism
Duke, David . . . . Apr 92
neurobiology
Levi-Montalcini, Rita . . . . Science 96
New York City Ballet
Kistler, Darci . . . . Jan 93
New York Knicks
Ewing, Patrick . . . . Jan 95
New York Rangers
Messier, Mark . . . . Apr 96
New York Yankees
Mantle, Mickey . . . . Jan 96
New Zealander
Hillary, Sir Edmund . . . . Sep 96
"Nick News"
Ellerbee, Linda . . . . Apr 94
Nigerian
Olajuwon, Hakeem . . . . Sep 95
Saro-Wiwa, Ken . . . . Env 97
Nirvana
Cobain, Kurt . . . . Sep 94
Nobel Prize
Aung San Suu Kyi . . . . Apr 96
Bardeen, John . . . . Science 96
de Klerk, F.W. . . . . Apr 94
Gorbachev, Mikhail . . . . Jan 92
Levi-Montalcini, Rita . . . . Science 96
Mandela, Nelson . . . . Update 94
McClintock, Barbara . . . . Oct 92
Menchu, Rigoberta . . . . Jan 93
Morrison, Toni . . . . Jan 94
Ochoa, Severo . . . . Jan 94
Pauling, Linus . . . . Jan 95
Sadat, Anwar . . . . ModAfr 97
Oakland Athletics, batboy
Hammer . . . . Jan 92
obituaries
Abbey, Edward . . . . Env 97
Adams, Ansel . . . . Artist 96
Aidid, Mohammed Farah . . . . . ModAfr 97
Anderson, Marian . . . . Jan 94
Ashe, Arthur . . . . Sep 93
Asimov, Isaac . . . . Jul 92
Baldwin, James . . . . Author 96
Bardeen, John . . . . Science 96
Bearden, Romare . . . . Artist 96
Bourke-White, Margaret . . . . Artist 96
Brown, Ron . . . . Sep 96
Burger, Warren . . . . Sep 95
Calder, Alexander . . . . Artist 96
Candy, John . . . . Sep 94
Carson, Rachel . . . . Env 97
Chagall, Marc . . . . Artist 96
Chavez, Cesar . . . . Sep 93
Childress, Alice . . . . Author 95
Cobain, Kurt . . . . Sep 94
Dahl, Roald . . . . Author 95
de Mille, Agnes . . . . Jan 95
Ellison, Ralph . . . . Author 97
Fitzgerald, Ella . . . . Jan 97
Fitzhugh, Louise . . . . Author 97
Fossey, Dian . . . . Science 96
Garcia, Jerry . . . . Jan 96
Gillespie, Dizzy . . . . Apr 93
Haley, Alex . . . . Apr 92
Hargreaves, Alison . . . . Jan 96
Herriot, James . . . . Author 95
Jordan, Barbara . . . . Apr 96
Land, Edwin . . . . Science 96
Leakey, Louis . . . . Science 96
Lewis, C. S. . . . . Author 97
Maathai, Wangari . . . . Env 97
Mantle, Mickey . . . . Jan 96
Marshall, Thurgood . . . . Update 93
Masih, Iqbal . . . . Jan 96
McClintock, Barbara . . . . Oct 92
Mendes, Chico . . . . Env 97
Monroe, Bill . . . . Sep 97
Moore, Henry . . . . Artist 96
Moses, Grandma . . . . Artist 96
Murie, Olaus J. . . . . Env 97
Nevelson, Louise . . . . Artist 96
Nixon, Richard . . . . Sep 94
Nureyev, Rudolf . . . . Apr 93
Ochoa, Severo . . . . Jan 94
O'Dell, Scott . . . . Author 96
O'Keeffe, Georgia . . . . Artist 96
Oliver, Patsy Ruth . . . . Env 97
Oppenheimer, J. Robert . . . . Science 96
Pauling, Linus . . . . Jan 95
Peterson, Roger Tory . . . . Env 97

Phoenix, River . . . . Apr 94
Rabin, Yitzhak . . . . Update 95
Rivera, Diego . . . . Artist 96
Rockwell, Norman . . . . Artist 96
Rudolph, Wilma . . . . Apr 95
Sabin, Albert . . . . Science 96
Salk, Jonas . . . . Update 95
Saro-Wiwa, Ken . . . . Env 97
Scarry, Richard . . . . Sep 94
Selena . . . . Jan 96
Seuss, Dr. . . . . Jan 92
Shakur, Tupac . . . . Apr 97
Speare, Elizabeth George . . . . Sep 95
Thomas, Lewis . . . . Apr 94
Travers, P.L. . . . . Author 96
Warhol, Andy . . . . Artist 96
White, E.B. . . . . Author 95
Wilder, Laura Ingalls . . . . Author 97
Williams, Garth . . . . Author 96
Wright, Frank Lloyd . . . . Artist 96
Zamora, Pedro . . . . Apr 95

oil executive
Bush, George . . . . Jan 92

Olympics
Baiul, Oksana . . . . Apr 95
Bird, Larry . . . . Jan 92
Blair, Bonnie . . . . Apr 94
Boulmerka, Hassiba . . . . Sport 96
Evans, Janet . . . . Jan 95; Update 96
Ewing, Patrick . . . . Jan 95
Griffith Joyner, Florence . . . . Sport 96
Harding, Tonya . . . . Sep 94
Hill, Grant . . . . Sport 96
Jansen, Dan . . . . Apr 94
Johnson, Michael . . . . Jan 97
Joyner-Kersee, Jackie . . . Oct 92; Update 96
Kerrigan, Nancy . . . . Apr 94
Lewis, Carl . . . . Sep 96
Miller, Shannon . . . . Sep 94; Update 96
Pippig, Uta . . . . Sport 96
Robinson, David . . . . Sep 96
Rudolph, Wilma . . . . Apr 95
Sanchez Vicario, Arantxa . . . . Sport 96
Yamaguchi, Kristi . . . . Apr 92
Zmeskal, Kim . . . . Jan 94

opera
Anderson, Marian . . . . Jan 94
Battle, Kathleen . . . . Jan 93
Domingo, Placido . . . . Sep 95

"Oprah Winfrey Show, The"
Winfrey, Oprah . . . . Apr 92

Orlando Magic
O'Neal, Shaquille . . . . Sep 93

painters
Chagall, Marc . . . . Artist 96
Frankenthaler, Helen . . . . Artist 96
Johns, Jasper . . . . Artist 96
Lawrence, Jacob . . . . Artist 96
Moses, Grandma . . . . Artist 96
O'Keeffe, Georgia . . . . Artist 96
Rivera, Diego . . . . Artist 96
Rockwell, Norman . . . . Artist 96
Warhol, Andy . . . . Artist 96

Pakistani
Bhutto, Benazir . . . . Apr 95
Masih, Iqbal . . . . Jan 96

Pakistan, Prime Minister of
Bhutto, Benazir . . . . Apr 95

paleontology
Horner, Jack . . . . Science 96
Leakey, Louis . . . . Science 96
Leakey, Mary . . . . Science 96

Palestinian
Arafat, Yasir . . . . Sep 94; Update 94;
Update 95; Update 96

Peanuts
Schulz, Charles . . . . Author 96

Perot Systems Corp.
Perot, H. Ross . . . . Apr 92

Philadelphia 76ers
Barkley, Charles . . . . Apr 92

Phoenix Suns
Barkley, Charles . . . . Apr 92

photography
Adams, Ansel . . . . Artist 96
Bourke-White, Margaret . . . . Artist 96
Land, Edwin . . . . Science 96
Leibovitz, Annie . . . . Sep 96
Parks, Gordon . . . . Artist 96

physics
Bardeen, John . . . . Science 96
Hawking, Stephen . . . . Apr 92
Land, Edwin . . . . Science 96
Oppenheimer, J. Robert . . . . Science 96
Sagan, Carl . . . . Science 96

pilot
Van Meter, Vicki . . . . Jan 95

Pittsburgh Penguins
Lemieux, Mario . . . . Jul 92; Update 93

PLO (Palestine Liberation Organization)
Arafat, Yasir . . . . Sep 94; Update 94;
Update 95; Update 96

Poet Laureate of the United States
Dove, Rita . . . . Jan 94
poets
Brooks, Gwendolyn . . . . Author 97
Dove, Rita . . . . Jan 94
Silverstein, Shel . . . . Author 97
Polaroid Corporation
Land, Edwin . . . . Science 96
polio vaccine
Sabin, Albert . . . . Science 96
Salk, Jonas . . . . Jan 94; Update 95
Polish
John Paul II . . . . Oct 92; Update 94
politicians
Arafat, Yasir . . . . Sep 94; Update 94; Update 95; Update 96
Aristide, Jean-Bertrand . . . . Jan 95
Babbitt, Bruce . . . . Jan 94
Baker, James . . . . Oct 92
Banda, Hastings Kamuzu . . . . . ModAfr 97
Bhutto, Benazir . . . . Apr 95
Boutros-Ghali, Boutros . . . . Apr 93
Brown, Ron . . . . Sep 96
Bush, George . . . . Jan 92
Castro, Fidel . . . . Jul 92; Update 94
Cisneros, Henry . . . . Sep 93
Clinton, Bill . . . . Jul 92; Update 94; Update 95; Update 96
de Klerk, F.W. . . . . Apr 94; Update 94
Dole, Bob . . . . Jan 96; Update 96
Duke, David . . . . Apr 92
Gingrich, Newt . . . . Apr 95
Gorbachev, Mikhail . . . . Jan 92; Update 94; Update 96
Gore, Al . . . . Jan 93; Update 96
Hussein, Saddam . . . . Jul 92; Update 96
Jackson, Jesse . . . . Sep 95
Jordan, Barbara . . . . Apr 96
Kaunda, Kenneth . . . . ModAfr 97
Kenyatta, Jomo . . . . ModAfr 97
Mandela, Nelson . . . . Jan 92; Update 94
Mobutu Sese Seko . . . . ModAfr 97
Mugabe, Robert . . . . ModAfr 97
Nixon, Richard . . . . Sep 94
Nkrumah, Kwame . . . . ModAfr 97
Perot, H. Ross . . . . Apr 92; Update 93; Update 95; Update 96
Rabin, Yitzhak . . . . Oct 92; Update 93; Update 94; Update 95
Robinson, Mary . . . . Sep 93
Savimbi, Jonas . . . . ModAfr 97
Schroeder, Pat . . . . Jan 97
Senghor, Léopold Sédar . . . . . . ModAfr 97
Tubman, William V. S. . . . . . . ModAfr 97
Yeltsin, Boris . . . . Apr 92; Update 93; Update 95; Update 96
Pope of the Roman Catholic Church
John Paul II . . . . Oct 92; Update 94
President of Cuba
Castro, Fidel . . . . Jul 92; Update 94
President of Egypt
Sadat, Anwar . . . . ModAfr 97
President of Ghana
Nkrumah, Kwame . . . . ModAfr 97
President of Haiti
Aristide, Jean-Bertrand . . . . Jan 95
President of Iraq
Hussein, Saddam . . . . Jul 92; Update 96
President of Ireland
Robinson, Mary . . . . Sep 93
President of Kenya
Kenyatta, Jomo . . . . ModAfr 97
President of Liberia
Tubman, William V. S. . . . . . . ModAfr 97
President of Malawi
Banda, Hastings Kamuzu . . . . . ModAfr 97
President of the Republic of South Africa
de Klerk, F.W. . . . . Apr 94; Update 94
Mandela, Nelson . . . . Update 94
President of the Republic of Tanzania
Nyerere, Julius Kambarage . . . . ModAfr 97
President of the Russian Federation
Yeltsin, Boris . . . . Apr 92; Update 93
President of Senegal
Senghor, Léopold Sédar . . . . . . ModAfr 97
President of the Soviet Union
Gorbachev, Mikhail . . . . Jan 92
President of Uganda
Amin, Idi . . . . ModAfr 97
President of the United States
Bush, George . . . . Jan 92
Carter, Jimmy . . . . Apr 95
Clinton, Bill . . . . Jul 92; Update 94; Update 95; Update 96
Nixon, Richard . . . . Sep 94
President of Zaire
Mobutu Sese Seko . . . . ModAfr 97
President of Zambia
Kaunda, Kenneth . . . . ModAfr 97
President of Zimbabwe
Mugabe, Robert . . . . ModAfr 97

primatology
Mittermeier, Russell A. . . . . Env 97
Prime Minister of Israel
Rabin, Yitzhak . . . . Oct 92; Update 93;
Update 94; Update 95
Prime Minister of Pakistan
Bhutto, Benazir . . . . Apr 95
Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma
Mankiller, Wilma . . . . Apr 94
producers
Cousteau, Jacques . . . . Jan 93
Lucas, George . . . . Apr 97
publishers
Johnson, John . . . . Jan 97
Seuss, Dr. . . . . Jan 92
Puerto Rican
see also Hispanic-American
Lopez, Charlotte . . . . Apr 94
Novello, Antonia . . . . Apr 92
radio
Limbaugh, Rush . . . . Sep 95
Roberts, Cokie . . . . Apr 95
rappers
Coolio . . . . Sep 96
Hammer . . . . Jan 92
Ice-T . . . . Apr 93
Queen Latifah . . . . Apr 92
Salt 'N' Pepa . . . . Apr 95
Shakur, Tupac . . . . Apr 97
Smith, Will . . . . Sep 94
"Real World, The"
Zamora, Pedro . . . . Apr 95
recording artists
Abdul, Paula . . . . Jan 92
Anderson, Marian . . . . Jan 94
Battle, Kathleen . . . . Jan 93
Boyz II Men . . . . Jan 96
Brandy . . . . Apr 96
Brooks, Garth . . . . Oct 92
Carey, Mariah . . . . Apr 96
Carpenter, Mary Chapin . . . . Sep 94
Cobain, Kurt . . . . Sep 94
Coolio . . . . Sep 96
Cosby, Bill . . . . Jan 92
Dion, Celine . . . . Sep 97
Domingo, Placido . . . . Sep 95
Estefan, Gloria . . . . Jul 92
Fitzgerald, Ella . . . . Jan 97
Garcia, Jerry . . . . Jan 96
Grant, Amy . . . . Jan 95
Guy, Jasmine . . . . Sep 93
Hammer . . . . Jan 92
Houston, Whitney . . . . Sep 94
Ice-T . . . . Apr 93
lang, k.d. . . . . Sep 93
Ma, Yo-Yo . . . . Jul 92
Marsalis, Wynton . . . . Apr 92
McEntire, Reba . . . . Sep 95
Monroe, Bill . . . . Sep 97
Morissette, Alanis . . . . Apr 97
Queen Latifah . . . . Apr 92
Salt 'N' Pepa . . . . Apr 95
Selena . . . . Jan 96
Shakur, Tupac . . . . Apr 97
Smith, Will . . . . Sep 94
Red Cross
see American Red Cross
Republican National Committee, chairman
Bush, George . . . . Jan 92
Republican Party
Baker, James . . . . Oct 92
Bush, George . . . . Jan 92
Gingrich, Newt . . . . Apr 95
Nixon, Richard . . . . Sep 94
Rhodes Scholar
Clinton, Bill . . . . Jul 92
robots
Asimov, Isaac . . . . Jul 92
Roman Catholic Church
John Paul II . . . . Oct 92; Update 94
"Roseanne"
Arnold, Roseanne . . . . Oct 92
Gilbert, Sara . . . . Apr 93
Goodman, John . . . . Sep 95
"The Rosie O'Donnell Show"
O'Donnell, Rosie . . . . Apr 97
royalty
Diana, Princess of Wales Jul 92; Update 96
Haile Selassie . . . . ModAfr 97
Hassan II . . . . ModAfr 97
runners
Boulmerka, Hassiba . . . . Sport 96
Griffith Joyner, Florence . . . . Sport 96
Johnson, Michael . . . . Jan 97
Lewis, Carl . . . . Sep 96
Ndeti, Cosmas . . . . Sep 95
Pippig, Uta . . . . Sport 96
Rudolph, Wilma . . . . Apr 95
"Rush Limbaugh: The Television Show"
Limbaugh, Rush . . . . Sep 95

Russian
Chagall, Marc . . . Artist 96
Fedorov, Sergei . . . Apr 94; Update 94
Gorbachev, Mikhail . . . Jan 92; Update 96
Nevelson, Louise . . . Artist 96
Yeltsin, Boris . . . Apr 92; Update 93; Update 95; Update 96
Russian Federation, president of
Yeltsin, Boris Apr 92; Update 93; Update 96
San Antonio Spurs
Robinson, David . . . Sep 96
San Francisco 49ers
Rice, Jerry . . . Apr 93
Young, Steve . . . Jan 94
"Saturday Night Live"
Carvey, Dana . . . Jan 93
science fiction literature
Asimov, Isaac . . . Jul 92
Bradbury, Ray . . . Author 97
Lewis, C. S. . . . Author 97
Science Talent Search, Westinghouse
Cohen, Adam Ezra . . . Apr 97
Pine, Elizabeth Michele . . . Jan 94
scientists
Asimov, Isaac . . . Jul 92
Askins, Renee . . . Env 97
Bardeen, John . . . Science 96
Carson, Rachel . . . Env 97
Earle, Sylvia . . . Science 96
Fossey, Dian . . . Science 96
Goodall, Jane . . . Science 96
Hawking, Stephen . . . Apr 92
Healy, Bernadine . . . Science 96
Horner, Jack . . . Science 96
Jemison, Mae . . . Oct 92
Krim, Mathilde . . . Science 96
Land, Edwin . . . Science 96
Leakey, Louis . . . Science 96
Leakey, Mary . . . Science 96
Levi-Montalcini, Rita . . . Science 96
Margulis, Lynn . . . Sep 96
McClintock, Barbara . . . Oct 92
Mittermeier, Russell A. . . . Env 97
Ochoa, Severo . . . Jan 94
Oppenheimer, J. Robert . . . Science 96
Pauling, Linus . . . Jan 95
Ride, Sally . . . Jan 92
Sabin, Albert . . . Science 96
Sagan, Carl . . . Science 96
Salk, Jonas . . . Jan 94; Update 95
Thomas, Lewis . . . Apr 94
Tuttle, Merlin . . . Apr 97
Watson, James D. . . . Science 96
scientology
Alley, Kirstie . . . Jul 92
Seinfeld, Jerry . . . Oct 92
"SCTV"
Candy, John . . . Sep 94
sculptors
Calder, Alexander . . . Artist 96
Lin, Maya . . . Sep 97
Moore, Henry . . . Artist 96
Nevelson, Louise . . . Artist 96
Sea Shepherd Conservation Society
Watson, Paul . . . Env 97
"seaQuest DSV"
Brandis, Jonathan . . . Sep 95
Seattle Mariners
Griffey, Ken, Jr. . . . Sport 96
"The Secret World of Alex Mack"
Oleynik, Larisa . . . Sep 96
Secretary General of the United Nations
Boutros-Ghali, Boutros . . . Apr 93
Secretary of Commerce, U.S.
Brown, Ron . . . Sep 96
Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, U.S.
Cisneros, Henry . . . Sep 93
Secretary of Interior, U.S.
Babbitt, Bruce . . . Jan 94
Secretary of Labor, U.S.
Dole, Elizabeth Hanford . . . Jul 92
Secretary of State, U.S.
Albright, Madeleine . . . Apr 97
Baker, James . . . Oct 92
Secretary of Transportation, U.S.
Dole, Elizabeth Hanford . . . Jul 92
Secretary of Treasury, U.S.
Baker, James . . . Oct 92
"Seinfeld"
Seinfeld, Jerry . . . Oct 92
Senate Majority Leader, U.S.
Dole, Bob . . . Jan 96; Update 96
Senegal, president of
Senghor, Léopold Sédar . . . ModAfr 97
Senegalese
Senghor, Léopold Sédar . . . ModAfr 97
sexual harassment
Hill, Anita . . . Jan 93
Sierra Club
Werbach, Adam . . . Env 97

"Simpsons, The"
Groening, Matt . . . . Jan 92
singers
Abdul, Paula . . . . Jan 92
Anderson, Marian . . . . Jan 94
Battle, Kathleen . . . . Jan 93
Boyz II Men . . . . Jan 96
Brandy . . . . Apr 96
Brooks, Garth . . . . Oct 92
Carey, Mariah . . . . Apr 96
Carpenter, Mary Chapin . . . . Sep 94
Cobain, Kurt . . . . Sep 94
Dion, Celine . . . . Sep 97
Domingo, Placido . . . . Sep 95
Estefan, Gloria . . . . Jul 92
Fitzgerald, Ella . . . . Jan 97
Grant, Amy . . . . Jan 95
Guy, Jasmine . . . . Sep 93
Houston, Whitney . . . . Sep 94
lang, k.d. . . . . Sep 93
McEntire, Reba . . . . Sep 95
Monroe, Bill . . . . Sep 97
Morissette, Alanis . . . . Apr 97
Salt 'N' Pepa . . . . Apr 95
Selena . . . . Jan 96
"60 Minutes"
Bradley, Ed . . . . Apr 94
skaters
Baiul, Oksana . . . . Apr 95
Blair, Bonnie . . . . Apr 94; Update 95
Harding, Tonya . . . . Sep 94
Jansen, Dan . . . . Apr 94
Kerrigan, Nancy . . . . Apr 94
Yamaguchi, Kristi . . . . Apr 92
sled-dog racer
Butcher, Susan . . . . Sport 96
soccer players
Lalas, Alexi . . . . Sep 94
Pelé . . . . Sport 96
Somalian
Aidid, Mohammed Farah . . . . ModAfr 97
South Africa, president of
de Klerk, F.W. . . . . Apr 94; Update 94
Mandela, Nelson . . . . Update 94
South African
de Klerk, F.W. . . . . Apr 94; Update 94
Mandela, Nelson . . . . Jan 92; Update 94
Mandela, Winnie . . . . ModAfr 97
Soviet Union, president of
Gorbachev, Mikhail . . . . Jan 92
Spanish
Domingo, Placido . . . . Sep 95
Sanchez Vicario, Arantxa . . . . Sport 96
Speaker of the House of Representatives, U.S.
Gingrich, Newt . . . . Apr 95
Spelling Bee, Scripps Howard National
Andrews, Ned . . . . Sep 94
Guey, Wendy . . . . Sep 96
Hooper, Geoff . . . . Jan 94
Sealfon, Rebecca . . . . Sep 97
spina bifida
Driscoll, Jean . . . . Sep 97
sprinter
Johnson, Michael . . . . Jan 97
"Star Trek"
Shatner, William . . . . Apr 95
"Star Trek: The Next Generation"
Goldberg, Whoopi . . . . Apr 94
Stewart, Patrick . . . . Jan 94
Star Wars
Ford, Harrison . . . . Sep 97
Lucas, George . . . . Apr 97
Supreme Court justices, U.S.
Burger, Warren . . . . Sep 95
Ginsburg, Ruth Bader . . . . Jan 94
Marshall, Thurgood . . . . Jan 92; Update 93
O'Connor, Sandra Day . . . . Jul 92
Thomas, Clarence . . . . Jan 92
Surgeon General, U.S.
Novello, Antonia . . . . Apr 92; Update 93
swimmer
Evans, Janet . . . . Jan 95; Update 96
Syrian-Brazilian
Abdul, Paula . . . . Jan 92
Tanzania, president of the republic of
Nyerere, Julius Kambarage . . . . ModAfr 97
Tanzanian
Nyerere, Julius Kambarage . . . . ModAfr 97
Tartar
Nureyev, Rudolf . . . . Apr 93
television
Allen, Tim . . . . Apr 94
Alley, Kirstie . . . . Jul 92
Anderson, Gillian . . . . Jan 97
Arnold, Roseanne . . . . Oct 92
Bergen, Candice . . . . Sep 93
Bialik, Mayim . . . . Jan 94
Blanchard, Rachel . . . . Apr 97
Brandis, Jonathan . . . . Sep 95
Brandy . . . . Apr 96

Bryan, Zachery Ty .... Jan 97
Burke, Chris .... Sep 93
Burns, Ken .... Jan 95
Cameron, Candace .... Apr 95
Candy, John .... Sep 94
Carvey, Dana .... Jan 93
Chung, Connie .... Jan 94; Update 95; Update 96
Cosby, Bill .... Jan 92
Cousteau, Jacques .... Jan 93
Crawford, Cindy .... Apr 93
Doherty, Shannen .... Apr 92; Update 94
Duchovny, David .... Apr 96
Ellerbee, Linda .... Apr 94
Fuentes, Daisy .... Jan 94
Garth, Jennie .... Apr 96
Gilbert, Sara .... Apr 93
Goldberg, Whoopi .... Apr 94
Goodman, John .... Sep 95
Groening, Matt .... Jan 92
Gumbel, Bryant .... Apr 97
Guy, Jasmine .... Sep 93
Hart, Melissa Joan .... Jan 94
Jennings, Peter .... Jul 92
Leno, Jay .... Jul 92
Letterman, David .... Jan 95
Limbaugh, Rush .... Sep 95
Locklear, Heather .... Jan 95
Madden, John .... Sep 97
O'Donnell, Rosie .... Apr 97
Oleynik, Larisa .... Sep 96
Olsen, Ashley .... Sep 95
Olsen, Mary Kate .... Sep 95
Pauley, Jane .... Oct 92
Perry, Luke .... Jan 92
Priestley, Jason .... Apr 92
Roberts, Cokie .... Apr 95
Sagan, Carl .... Science 96
Seinfeld, Jerry .... Oct 92
Shatner, William .... Apr 95
Smith, Will .... Sep 94
Soren, Tabitha .... Jan 97
Stewart, Patrick .... Jan 94
Thiessen, Tiffani-Amber .... Jan 96
Thomas, Jonathan Taylor .... Apr 95
Walters, Barbara .... Sep 94
Wayans, Keenen Ivory .... Jan 93
White, Jaleel .... Jan 96
Williams, Robin .... Apr 92
Winfrey, Oprah .... Apr 92
Zamora, Pedro .... Apr 95

tennis players
Agassi, Andre .... Jul 92
Ashe, Arthur .... Sep 93
Evert, Chris .... Sport 96
Graf, Steffi .... Jan 92
Navratilova, Martina .... Jan 93; Update 94
Sampras, Pete .... Jan 97
Sanchez Vicario, Arantxa .... Sport 96
Seles, Monica .... Jan 96

Texas Rangers
Ryan, Nolan .... Oct 92; Update 93

theater
Childress, Alice .... Author 95
Goodman, John .... Sep 95
Stewart, Patrick .... Jan 94
Zindel, Paul .... Author 95

"Today" Show, The
Gumbel, Bryant .... Apr 97
Pauley, Jane .... Oct 92
Walters, Barbara .... Sep 94

"Tonight Show with Jay Leno, The"
Leno, Jay .... Jul 92

"20/20"
Walters, Barbara .... Sep 94

Uganda, president of
Amin, Idi .... ModAfr 97

Ugandan
Amin, Idi .... ModAfr 97

Ukrainian
Baiul, Oksana .... Apr 95

UNITA (National Union for the Total Independence of Angola)
Savimbi, Jonas .... ModAfr 97

United Farm Workers (UFW)
Chavez, Cesar .... Sep 93

United National Independence Party (Zambia)
Kaunda, Kenneth .... ModAfr 97

United Nations
– **Ambassador to**
    Albright, Madeleine .... Apr 97
    Bush, George .... Jan 92
– **Secretary General**
    Boutros-Ghali, Boutros .... Apr 93

United States
– **Army, general**
    Powell, Colin .... Jan 92; Update 93
    Schwarzkopf, H. Norman .... Jan 92
– **Attorney General**
    Reno, Janet .... Sep 93

– First Lady of
Bush, Barbara . . . . Jan 92
Clinton, Hillary Rodham . . . . Apr 93; Update 94; Update 95; Update 96
– Joint Chiefs of Staff, Chairman of
Powell, Colin . . . . Jan 92; Update 93
– National Institutes of Health
Healy, Bernadine . . . . Science 96
– Poet Laureate
Dove, Rita. . . . . Jan 94
– President of
Bush, George . . . . Jan 92
Carter, Jimmy . . . . Apr 95
Clinton, Bill. . . . . Jul 92; Update 94; Update 95; Update 96
Nixon, Richard . . . . Sep 94
– Secretary of Commerce
Brown, Ron . . . . Sep 96
– Secretary of Housing and Urban Development
Cisneros, Henry . . . . Sep 93
– Secretary of Interior
Babbitt, Bruce. . . . . Jan 94
– Secretary of Labor
Dole, Elizabeth Hanford . . . . Jul 92
– Secretary of State
Albright, Madeleine . . . . Apr 97
Baker, James . . . . Oct 92
– Secretary of Transportation
Dole, Elizabeth Hanford . . . . Jul 92
– Secretary of Treasury
Baker, James . . . . Oct 92
– Senate Majority Leader
Dole, Bob . . . . Jan 96; Update 96
– Speaker of the House of Representatives
Gingrich, Newt. . . . . Apr 95
– Supreme Court, justice of
Burger, Warren . . . . Sep 95
Ginsburg, Ruth Bader . . . . Jan 94
Marshall, Thurgood. . . Jan 92; Update 93
O'Connor, Sandra Day . . . . Jul 92
Thomas, Clarence . . . . Jan 92
– Surgeon General
Novello, Antonia. . . . . Apr 92; Update 93
– Vice-President of
Bush, George . . . . Jan 92
Gore, Al . . . . Jan 93; Update 96
Nixon, Richard . . . . Sep 94
– White House Chief of Staff
Baker, James . . . . Oct 92
veterinarian
Herriot, James . . . . Author 95
Vice-President of the United States
Bush, George. Jan 92
Gore, Al . . . . Jan 93; Update 96
Nixon, Richard . . . . Sep 94
Watergate
Jordan, Barbara . . . . Apr 96
Nixon, Richard . . . . Sep 94
Wendy's
Thomas, Dave . . . . Apr 96
White House Chief of Staff
Baker, James . . . . Oct 92
Wilderness Society
Murie, Margaret. . . . . Env 97
Murie, Olaus J. . . . . Env 97
Wildlands Project
Foreman, Dave. . . . . Env 97
Wimbledon winners
Agassi, Andre. Jul 92
Evert, Chris . . . . Sport 96
Navratilova, Martina. . . . Jan 93; Update 94
Sampras, Pete . . . . Jan 97
Winfield Foundation, David M.
Winfield, Dave . . . . Jan 93
Wolf Fund
Askins, Renee. . . . . Env 97
wrestlers
Hogan, Hulk. Apr 92
WWF (World Wrestling Federation)
Hogan, Hulk. Apr 92
"The X-Files"
Anderson, Gillian . . . . Jan 97
Duchovny, David. . . . . Apr 96
Zaire, president of
Mobutu Sese Seko . . . . ModAfr 97
Zairian
Mobutu Sese Seko . . . . ModAfr 97
Zambia, president of
Kaunda, Kenneth . . . . ModAfr 97
Zambian
Kaunda, Kenneth . . . . ModAfr 97
Zimbabwe, president of
Mugabe, Robert . . . . ModAfr 97
Zimbabwe African National Union (Zimbabwe)
Mugabe, Robert . . . . ModAfr 97
Zimbabwean
Mugabe, Robert . . . . ModAfr 97
zoology
Fossey, Dian. . . . . Science 96

Places of Birth Index

The following index lists the places of birth for the individuals profiled in *Biography Today*. Places of birth are entered under state, province, and/or country.

Alabama
Aaron, Hank – *Mobile* . . . . Sport 96
Barkley, Charles – *Leeds* . . . . Apr 92
Jackson, Bo – *Bessemer* . . . . Jan 92
Jemison, Mae – *Decatur* . . . . Oct 92
Lewis, Carl – *Birmingham* . . . . Sep 96
Parks, Rosa – *Tuskegee* . . . . Apr 92
Whitestone, Heather – *Dothan* . . . . . Apr 95
Algeria
Boulmerka, Hassiba – *Constantine* Sport 96
Angola
Savimbi, Jonas – *Munhango* . . . . ModAfr 97
Arizona
Chavez, Cesar – *Yuma* . . . . Sep 93
Morrison, Sam – *Flagstaff* . . . . Sep 97
Strug, Kerri – *Tucson* . . . . Sep 96
Arkansas
Clinton, Bill – *Hope* . . . . Jul 92
Clinton, Chelsea – *Little Rock* . . . . . . Apr 96
Grisham, John – *Jonesboro* . . . . . . Author 95
Johnson, John – *Arkansas City* . . . . . . Jan 97
Pippen, Scottie – *Hamburg* . . . . Oct 92
Australia
Norman, Greg – *Mt. Isa, Queensland* Jan 94
Travers, P.L. – *Maryborough, Queensland* . . . . Author 96
Bosnia-Herzogovina
Filipovic, Zlata – *Sarajevo* . . . . Sep 94
Brazil
Mendes, Chico – *Xapuri, Acre* . . . . . . Env 97
Pelé – *Tres Coracoes, Minas Gerais* Sport 96
Bulgaria
Christo – *Gabrovo* . . . . Sep 96
Burma
Aung San Suu Kyi – *Rangoon* . . . . . . Apr 96
California
Abdul, Paula – *Van Nuys* . . . . Jan 92
Adams, Ansel – *San Francisco* . . . . . Artist 96
Aikman, Troy – *West Covina* . . . . Apr 95
Allen, Marcus – *San Diego* . . . . Sep 97
Babbitt, Bruce – *Los Angeles* . . . . Jan 94
Bergen, Candice – *Beverly Hills* . . . . . Sep 93
Bialik, Mayim – *San Diego* . . . . Jan 94
Breathed, Berke – *Encino* . . . . Jan 92
Brower, David – *Berkeley* . . . . Env 97
Cameron, Candace . . . . Apr 95
Coolio – *Los Angeles* . . . . Sep 96
Evans, Janet – *Fullerton* . . . . Jan 95
Fielder, Cecil – *Los Angeles* . . . . Sep 93
Fields, Debbi – *East Oakland* . . . . Jan 96
Fossey, Dian – *San Francisco* . . . . Science 96
Garcia, Jerry – *San Francisco* . . . . Jan 96
Gilbert, Sara – *Santa Monica* . . . . Apr 93
Griffith Joyner, Florence – *Los Angeles* . . . . Sport 96
Hammer – *Oakland* . . . . Jan 92
Hanks, Tom – *Concord* . . . . Jan 96
Jobs, Steven – *San Francisco* . . . . Jan 92
Kistler, Darci – *Riverside* . . . . Jan 93
LeMond, Greg – *Los Angeles* . . . . . . Sport 96
Locklear, Heather – *Los Angeles* . . . . . Jan 95
Lucas, George – *Modesto* . . . . Apr 97
Nixon, Joan Lowery – *Los Angeles* . . . . Author 95
Nixon, Richard – *Yorba Linda* . . . . . . Sep 94
O'Dell, Scott – *Terminal Island* . . . Author 96
Oleynik, Larisa – *San Fancisco* . . . . . . Sep 96
Olsen, Ashley . . . . Sep 95
Olsen, Mary Kate . . . . Sep 95
Ride, Sally – *Encino* . . . . Jan 92
Thiessen, Tiffini-Amber – *Modesto* . . . Jan 96
Werbach, Adam – *Tarzana* . . . . Env 97
White, Jaleel – *Los Angeles* . . . . Jan 96
Wilson, Mara – *Burbank* . . . . Jan 97
Woods, Tiger – *Long Beach* . . . . Sport 96
Yamaguchi, Kristi – *Fremont* . . . . Apr 92
Canada
Blanchard, Rachel – *Toronto, Ontario* Apr 97
Candy, John – *Newmarket, Ontario* . . Sep 94
Carrey, Jim – *Newmarket, Ontario* . . . Apr 96

Dion, Celine – *Charlemagne, Quebec* . Sep 97
Gretzky, Wayne – *Brantford, Ontario* Jan 92
Jennings, Peter – *Toronto, Ontario*. . . . Jul 92
lang, k.d. – *Edmonton, Alberta* . . . . . Sep 93
Lemieux, Mario – *Montreal, Quebec* . . Jul 92
Messier, Mark – *Edmonton, Alberta* . . Apr 96
Morissette, Alanis – *Ottawa, Ontario* Apr 97
Priestley, Jason – *Vancouver, British Columbia* . . . . Apr 92
Shatner, William – *Montreal, Quebec* Apr 95
Watson, Paul – *Toronto, Ontario* . . . . Env 97

China
Paterson, Katherine – *Qing Jiang, Jiangsu* . . . . Author 97
Pei, I.M. – *Canton*. . . . . Artist 96

Colorado
Allen, Tim – *Denver* . . . . Apr 94
Bryan, Zachery Ty – *Aurora* . . . . Jan 97

Connecticut
Brandis, Jonathan – *Danbury*. . . . . . . Sep 95
Land, Edwin – *Bridgeport*. . . . . . . Science 96
Leibovitz, Annie – *Waterbury* . . . . . . Sep 96
McClintock, Barbara – *Hartford*. . . . . Oct 92
Spock, Benjamin – *New Haven* . . . . . Sep 95

Cuba
Castro, Fidel – *Mayari, Oriente* . . . . . . Jul 92
Estefan, Gloria – *Havana* . . . . Jul 92
Fuentes, Daisy – *Havana*. . . . . Jan 94
Zamora, Pedro . . . . Apr 95

Czechoslovakia
Albright, Madeleine – *Prague* . . . . . . Apr 97
Navratilova, Martina – *Prague* . . . . . . Jan 93

Egypt
Arafat, Yasir – *Cairo* . . . . Sep 94
Boutros-Ghali, Boutros – *Cairo*. . . . . Apr 93
Sadat, Anwar – *Mit Abu al-Kum* . . . . ModAfr 97

England
Diana, Princess of Wales – *Norfolk* . . . Jul 92
Goodall, Jane – *London* . . . . Science 96
Handford, Martin – *London* . . . . Jan 92
Hargreaves, Alison – *Belper* . . . . Jan 96
Hawking, Stephen – *Oxford* . . . . Apr 92
Herriot, James – *Sunderland*. . . . . Author 95
Leakey, Mary – *London* . . . . Science 96
Macaulay, David – *Burton-on-Trent*. . . . . Author 96
Moore, Henry – *Castleford* . . . . Artist 96
Reid Banks, Lynne – *London* . . . . Author 96
Stewart, Patrick – *Mirfield*. . . . . Jan 94

Ethiopia
Haile Selassie – *Ejarsa Goro, Harar* . . . . ModAfr 97

Florida
Evert, Chris – *Ft. Lauderdale* . . . . . . Sport 96
Reno, Janet – *Miami* . . . . Sep 93
Robinson, David – *Key West* . . . . Sep 96
Sanders, Deion – *Ft. Myers* . . . . Sport 96
Smith, Emmitt – *Pensacola* . . . . Sep 94
Tarvin, Herbert – *Miami* . . . . Apr 97

France
Cousteau, Jacques – *St. Andre-de-Cubzac* . . . . Jan 93
Ma, Yo-Yo – *Paris*. . . . . Jul 92

Georgia
Carter, Jimmy – *Plains* . . . . Apr 95
Grant, Amy – *Augusta* . . . . Jan 95
Hogan, Hulk – *Augusta* . . . . Apr 92
Johns, Jasper – *Augusta* . . . . Artist 96
Lee, Spike – *Atlanta* . . . . Apr 92
Thomas, Clarence – *Pin Point*. . . . . . . Jan 92
Ward, Charlie – *Thomasville* . . . . Apr 94

Germany
Graf, Steffi – *Mannheim* . . . . Jan 92
Pippig, Uta – *Berlin* . . . . Sport 96

Ghana
Nkrumah, Kwame – *Nkrofro* . . . ModAfr 97

Guatemala
Menchu, Rigoberta – *Chimel, El Quiche* . . . . Jan 93

Haiti
Aristide, Jean-Bertrand – *Port-Salut*. . . Jan 95

Hawaii
Tuttle, Merlin – *Honolulu* . . . . Apr 97

Illinois
Anderson, Gillian – *Chicago*. . . . . Jan 97
Boyd, Candy Dawson – *Chicago*. . Author 97
Bradbury, Ray – *Waukegan*. . . . . . Author 97
Clinton, Hillary Rodham – *Chicago* . . Apr 93
Crawford, Cindy – *De Kalb* . . . . Apr 93
Garth, Jennie – *Urbana* . . . . Apr 96
Ford, Harrison – *Chicago* . . . . Sep 97
Joyner-Kersee, Jackie – *East St. Louis*. . . . . Oct 92
Margulis, Lynn – *Chicago*. . . . . Sep 96
McCully, Emily Arnold – *Galesburg* . . Jul 92
Silverstein, Shel – *Chicago* . . . . . . Author 97
Watson, James D. – *Chicago* . . . . Science 96

Indiana
Bird, Larry – *West Baden* . . . . Jan 92
Davis, Jim – *Marion* . . . . Author 95

Letterman, David – *Indianapolis* . . . . . Jan 95
Naylor, Phyllis Reynolds – *Anderson* Apr 93
Pauley, Jane – *Indianapolis* . . . . Oct 92
Vonnegut, Kurt – *Indianapolis* . . . Author 95

Iraq
Hussein, Saddam – *al-Auja* . . . . Jul 92

Ireland, Northern
Lewis, C. S. – *Belfast* . . . . Author 97

Ireland, Republic of
Robinson, Mary – *Ballina* . . . . Sep 93

Israel
Perlman, Itzhak – *Tel Aviv* . . . . Jan 95
Rabin, Yitzhak – *Jerusalem* . . . . Oct 92

Italy
Andretti, Mario – *Montona* . . . . Sep 94
Krim, Mathilde – *Como* . . . . Science 96
Levi-Montalcini, Rita – *Turin* . . . Science 96

Jamaica
Denton, Sandi – *Kingston* . . . . Apr 95
Ewing, Patrick – *Kingston* . . . . Jan 95

Kansas
Alley, Kirstie – *Wichita* . . . . Jul 92
Brooks, Gwendolyn – *Topeka* . . . Author 97
Dole, Bob – *Russell* . . . . Jan 96
Parks, Gordon – *Fort Scott* . . . . Artist 96
Sanders, Barry – *Wichita* . . . . Sep 95

Kentucky
Monroe, Bill – *Rosine* . . . . Sep 97

Kenya
Leakey, Louis – *Nairobi* . . . . Science 96
Kenyatta, Jomo – *Ngenda* . . . . . . ModAfr 97
Maathai, Wangari – *Nyeri* . . . . Env 97
Ndeti, Cosmas – *Machakos* . . . . Sep 95

Liberia
Tubman, William V. S.
– *Harper City* . . . . ModAfr 97

Libya
Qaddafi, Muammar . . . . Apr 97

Louisiana
Gumbel, Bryant – *New Orleans* . . . . . Apr 97
Marsalis, Wynton – *New Orleans* . . . Apr 92
Rice, Anne – *New Orleans* . . . . . . Author 97
Roberts, Cokie – *New Orleans* . . . . . . Apr 95

Maine
King, Stephen – *Portland* . . . . Author 95

Malawi
Banda, Hastings Kamuzu . . . . . ModAfr 97

Maryland
Marshall, Thurgood – *Baltimore* . . . . . Jan 92
Ripken, Cal, Jr. – *Havre de Grace* . . Sport 96

Massachusetts
Bush, George – *Milton* . . . . Jan 92
Butcher, Susan – *Cambridge* . . . . . . Sport 96
Cormier, Robert – *Leominister* . . . Author 95
Guey, Wendy – *Boston* . . . . Sep 96
Guy, Jasmine – *Boston* . . . . Sep 93
Kerrigan, Nancy – *Woburn* . . . . Apr 94
Pine, Elizabeth Michele – *Boston* . . . . Jan 94
Scarry, Richard – *Boston* . . . . Sep 94
Seuss, Dr. – *Springfield* . . . . Jan 92
Speare, Elizabeth George – *Melrose* . Sep 95
Voigt, Cynthia – *Boston* . . . . Oct 92
Walters, Barbara – *Boston* . . . . Sep 94

Mexico
Rivera, Diego – *Guanajuato* . . . . Artist 96

Michigan
Askins, Renee . . . . Env 97
Galeczka, Chris – *Sterling Heights* . . . Apr 96
Johnson, Magic – *Lansing* . . . . Apr 92
Krone, Julie – *Benton Harbor* . . . . Jan 95
Lalas, Alexi – *Royal Oak* . . . . Sep 94
Van Allsburg, Chris – *Grand Rapids* . . Apr 92

Minnesota
Burger, Warren – *St. Paul* . . . . Sep 95
Douglas, Marjory Stoneman
– *Minneapolis* . . . . Env 97
Madden, John – *Austin* . . . . Sep 97
Murie, Olaus J. Env 97
Paulsen, Gary – *Minneapolis* . . . . Author 95
Ryder, Winona – *Winona* . . . . Jan 93
Schulz, Charles – *Minneapolis* . . . Author 96
Winfield, Dave – *St. Paul* . . . . Jan 93

Mississippi
Brandy – *McComb* . . . . Apr 96
Jones, James Earl – *Arkabutla
Township* . . . . Jan 95
Rice, Jerry – *Crawford* . . . . Apr 93
Taylor, Mildred D. – *Jackson* . . . . . Author 95
Winfrey, Oprah – *Kosciusko* . . . . Apr 92

Missouri
Angelou, Maya – *St. Louis* . . . . Apr 93
Champagne, Larry III – *St. Louis* . . . . Apr 96
Goodman, John – *Affton* . . . . Sep 95
Limbaugh, Rush – *Cape Girardeau* . . Sep 95
Miller, Shannon – *Rolla* . . . . Sep 94

Montana
Carvey, Dana – *Missoula* . . . . Jan 93
Horner, Jack – *Shelby* . . . . Science 96

Morocco
Hassan II – *Rabat* . . . . ModAfr 97

Nevada
Agassi, Andre – *Las Vegas* .... Jul 92
New Jersey
Blume, Judy .... Jan 92
Carpenter, Mary Chapin – *Princeton* .... Sep 94
Earle, Sylvia – *Gibbstown* .... Science 96
Houston, Whitney – *Newark* .... Sep 94
Ice-T – *Newark* .... Apr 93
Lawrence, Jacob – *Atlantic City* .... Artist 96
Martin, Ann M. – *Princeton* .... Jan 92
O'Neal, Shaquille – *Newark* .... Sep 93
Queen Latifah – *Newark* .... Apr 92
Rodman, Dennis – *Trenton* .... Apr 96
Schwarzkopf, H. Norman – *Trenton* .... Jan 92
Thomas, Dave – *Atlantic City* .... Apr 96
New Mexico
Foreman, Dave – *Albuquerque* .... Env 97
New York State
Abdul-Jabbar, Kareem – *New York City* .... Sport 96
Avi – *New York City* .... Jan 93
Baldwin, James – *New York City* .... Author 96
Blair, Bonnie – *Cornwall* .... Apr 94
Bourke-White, Margaret – *New York City* .... Artist 96
Burke, Chris – *New York City* .... Sep 93
Burns, Ken – *Brooklyn* .... Jan 95
Bush, Barbara – *New York City* .... Jan 92
Carey, Mariah – *New York City* .... Apr 96
Carle, Eric – *Syracuse* .... Author 95
Cohen, Adam Ezra – *New York City* .... Apr 97
Culkin, Macaulay – *New York City* .... Sep 93
Danes, Claire – *New York City* .... Sep 97
de Mille, Agnes – *New York City* .... Jan 95
Duchovny, David – *New York City* .... Apr 96
Farrakhan, Louis – *Bronx* .... Jan 97
Frankenthaler, Helen – *New York City* .... Artist 96
Ginsburg, Ruth Bader – *Brooklyn* .... Jan 94
Goldberg, Whoopi – *New York City* .... Apr 94
Haley, Alex – *Ithaca* .... Apr 92
Hart, Melissa Joan – *Smithtown* .... Jan 94
Healy, Bernadine – *Queens* .... Science 96
James, Cheryl – *New York City* .... Apr 95
Jordan, Michael – *Brooklyn* .... Jan 92
Kerr, M.E. – *Auburn* .... Author 95
Konigsburg, E.L. – *New York City* .... Author 97
L'Engle, Madeleine – *New York City* .... Jan 92
Leno, Jay – *New Rochelle* .... Jul 92
Mittermeier, Russell A. – *New York City* .... Env 97
Moses, Grandma – *Greenwich* .... Artist 96
O'Donnell, Rosie – *Commack* .... Apr 97
Oppenheimer, J. Robert – *New York City* .... Science 96
Peterson, Roger Tory – *Jamestown* .... Env 97
Pike, Christopher – *Brooklyn* .... Sep 96
Powell, Colin – *New York City* .... Jan 92
Prelutsky, Jack – *Brooklyn* .... Author 96
Reeve, Christopher – *Manhattan* .... Jan 97
Ringgold, Faith – *New York City* .... Author 96
Rockwell, Norman – *New York City* .... Artist 96
Roper, Dee Dee – *New York City* .... Apr 95
Sagan, Carl – *Brooklyn* .... Science 96
Salinger, J.D. – *New York City* .... Author 96
Salk, Jonas – *New York City* .... Jan 94
Sealfon, Rebecca – *New York City* .... Sep 97
Seinfeld, Jerry – *Brooklyn* .... Oct 92
Sendak, Maurice – *Brooklyn* .... Author 96
Shakur, Tupac – *Bronx* .... Apr 97
Washington, Denzel – *Mount Vernon* .... Jan 93
Wayans, Keenen Ivory – *New York City* .... Jan 93
White, E.B. – *Mount Vernon* .... Author 95
Williams, Garth – *New York City* .... Author 96
Zindel, Paul – *Staten Island* .... Author 95
New Zealand
Hillary, Sir Edmund – *Auckland* .... Sep 96
Nigeria
Olajuwon, Hakeem – *Lagos* .... Sep 95
Saro-Wiwa, Ken – *Bori, Rivers State* .... Env 97
North Carolina
Bearden, Romare – *Charlotte* .... Artist 96
Chavis, Benjamin – *Oxford* .... Jan 94
Dole, Elizabeth Hanford – *Salisbury* .... Jul 92
Ohio
Anderson, Terry – *Lorain* .... Apr 92
Battle, Kathleen – *Portsmouth* .... Jan 93
Berry, Halle – *Cleveland* .... Jan 95
Dove, Rita – *Akron* .... Jan 94
Guisewite, Cathy – *Dayton* .... Sep 93
Hamilton, Virginia – *Yellow Springs* .... Author 95
Lin, Maya – *Athens* .... Sep 97
Lovell, Jim – *Cleveland* .... Jan 96

Morrison, Toni – *Lorain* . . . Jan 94
Perry, Luke – *Mansfield* . . . Jan 92
Rose, Pete – *Cincinnati* . . . Jan 92
Shula, Don – *Grand River* . . . Apr 96
Spielberg, Steven – *Cincinnati* . . . Jan 94
Steinem, Gloria – *Toledo* . . . Oct 92
Stine, R.L. – *Columbus* . . . Apr 94

Oklahoma
Brooks, Garth – *Tulsa* . . . Oct 92
Duke, David – *Tulsa* . . . Apr 92
Ellison, Ralph – *Oklahoma City* . . . Author 97
Hill, Anita – *Morris* . . . Jan 93
Hinton, S.E. – *Tulsa* . . . Author 95
Mankiller, Wilma – *Tahlequah* . . . Apr 94
Mantle, Mickey – *Spavinaw* . . . Jan 96
McEntire, Reba – *McAlester* . . . Sep 95

Oregon
Cleary, Beverly – *McMinnville* . . . Apr 94
Groening, Matt – *Portland* . . . Jan 92
Harding, Tonya – *Portland* . . . Sep 94
Hooper, Geoff – *Salem* . . . Jan 94
Pauling, Linus – *Portland* . . . Jan 95
Phoenix, River – *Madras* . . . Apr 94
Schroeder, Pat – *Portland* . . . Jan 97

Pakistan
Bhutto, Benazir – *Karachi* . . . Apr 95
Masih, Iqbal . . . Jan 96

Palestine
Perlman, Itzhak – *Tel Aviv* . . . Jan 95
Rabin, Yitzhak – *Jerusalem* . . . Oct 92

Pennsylvania
Abbey, Edward – *Indiana* . . . Env 97
Anderson, Marian – *Philadelphia* . . . Jan 94
Berenstain, Jan – *Philadelphia* . . . Author 96
Berenstain, Stan – *Philadelphia* . . . Author 96
Bradley, Ed – *Philadelphia* . . . Apr 94
Calder, Alexander – *Lawnton* . . . Artist 96
Carson, Rachel – *Springdale* . . . Env 97
Cosby, Bill . . . Jan 92
Duncan, Lois – *Philadelphia* . . . Sep 93
Gingrich, Newt – *Harrisburg* . . . Apr 95
Griffey, Ken, Jr. – *Donora* . . . Sport 96
Iacocca, Lee A. – *Allentown* . . . Jan 92
Jamison, Judith – *Philadelphia* . . . Jan 96
Marino, Dan – *Pittsburgh* . . . Apr 93
McCary, Michael – *Philadelphia* . . . Jan 96
Montana, Joe – *New Eagle* . . . Jan 95
Morris, Nathan – *Philadelphia* . . . Jan 96
Morris, Wanya – *Philadelphia* . . . Jan 96
Pinkney, Jerry – *Philadelphia* . . . Author 96
Smith, Will – *Philadelphia* . . . Sep 94
Stockman, Shawn – *Philadelphia* . . . Jan 96
Thomas, Jonathan Taylor
– *Bethlehem* . . . Apr 95
Van Meter, Vicki – *Meadville* . . . Jan 95
Warhol, Andy . . . Artist 96

Poland
John Paul II – *Wadowice* . . . Oct 92
Sabin, Albert – *Bialystok* . . . Science 96

Puerto Rico
Lopez, Charlotte . . . Apr 94
Novello, Antonia – *Fajardo* . . . Apr 92

Russia
Asimov, Isaac – *Petrovichi* . . . Jul 92
Chagall, Marc – *Vitebsk* . . . Artist 96
Fedorov, Sergei – *Pskov* . . . Apr 94
Gorbachev, Mikhail – *Privolnoye* . . . Jan 92
Nevelson, Louise – *Kiev* . . . Artist 96
Nureyev, *Rudolf* . . . Apr 93
Yeltsin, Boris – *Butka* . . . Apr 92

Senegal
Senghor, Léopold Sédar – *Joal* . . ModAfr 97

Serbia
Seles, Monica – *Novi Sad* . . . Jan 96

Somalia
Aidid, Mohammed Farah . . . ModAfr 97

South Africa
de Klerk, F.W. – *Mayfair* . . . Apr 94
Mandela, Nelson – *Umtata, Transkei* . . Jan 92
Mandela, Winnie
– *Pondoland, Transkei* . . . ModAfr 97

South Carolina
Childress, Alice – *Charleston* . . . Author 95
Daniel, Beth – *Charleston* . . . Sport 96
Edelman, Marian Wright
– *Bennettsville* . . . Apr 93
Gillespie, Dizzy – *Cheraw* . . . Apr 93
Jackson, Jesse – *Greenville* . . . Sep 95

Spain
Domingo, Placido – *Madrid* . . . Sep 95
Ochoa, Severo – *Luarca* . . . Jan 94
Sanchez Vicario, Arantxa
– *Barcelona* . . . Sport 96

Tanzania
Nyerere, Julius Kambarage . . . ModAfr 97

Tennessee
Andrews, Ned – *Oakridge* . . . Sep 94
Doherty, Shannen – *Memphis* . . . Apr 92
Fitzhugh, Louise – *Memphis* . . . Author 97
McKissack, Fredrick L. – *Nashville* Author 97
McKissack, Patricia C. – *Smyrna* . . Author 97
Rudolph, Wilma – *St. Bethlehem* . . . Apr 95

Texas
Baker, James – *Houston*. . . . . Oct 92
Cisneros, Henry – *San Antonio* . . . . . Sep 93
Ellerbee, Linda – *Bryan* . . . . Apr 94
Hill, Grant – *Dallas* . . . . Sport 96
Johnson, Michael – *Dallas* . . . . Jan 97
Jordan, Barbara – *Houston* . . . . Apr 96
O'Connor, Sandra Day – *El Paso* . . . . Jul 92
Oliver, Patsy Ruth – *Texarkana* . . . . . Env 97
Perot, H. Ross – *Texarkana* . . . . Apr 92
Ryan, Nolan – *Refugio*. . . . . Oct 92
Selena – *Lake Jackson* . . . . Jan 96
Soren, Tabitha – *San Antonio* . . . . Jan 97
Zmeskal, Kim – *Houston* . . . . Jan 94
Uganda
Amin, Idi – *Koboko*. . . . . ModAfr 97
Ukraine
Baiul, Oksana – *Dnepropetrovsk*. . . . . Apr 95
USSR – Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
Asimov, Isaac – *Petrovichi, Russia* . . . . Jul 92
Baiul, Oksana – *Dnepropetrovsk, Ukraine* . . . . Apr 95
Fedorov, Sergei – *Pskov, Russia* . . . . . Apr 94
Gorbachev, Mikhail – *Privolnoye, Russia* . . . . Jan 92
Nureyev, Rudolf – *Russia*. . . . . Apr 93
Yeltsin, Boris – *Butka, Russia* . . . . Apr 92
Utah
Arnold, Roseanne – *Salt Lake City* . . Oct 92
Young, Steve – *Salt Lake City* . . . . Jan 94
Virginia
Ashe, Arthur – *Richmond* . . . . Sep 93
Fitzgerald, Ella – *Newport News* . . . . . Jan 97
Rylant, Cynthia – *Hopewell* . . . . . Author 95
Wales
Dahl, Roald – *Llandaff* . . . . Author 95
Washington, D.C.
Brown, Ron . . . . Sep 96
Chung, Connie. . . . . Jan 94
George, Jean Craighead . . . . Author 97
Gore, Al . . . . Jan 93
Sampras, Pete . . . . Jan 97
Watterson, Bill . . . . Jan 92
Washington State
Cobain, Kurt – *Aberdeen*. . . . . Sep 94
Gates, Bill – *Seattle* . . . . Apr 93
Larson, Gary – *Tacoma*. . . . . Author 95
Murie, Margaret – *Seattle*. . . . . Env 97
West Virginia
Myers, Walter Dean – *Martinsburg*. . . . . Jan 93
Wisconsin
Bardeen, John – *Madison*. . . . . . . Science 96
Driscoll, Jean – *Milwaukee* . . . . Sep 97
Jansen, Dan – *Milwaukee* . . . . Apr 94
O'Keeffe, Georgia – *Sun Prairie* . . . Artist 96
Wilder, Laura Ingalls – *Pepin* . . . . Author 97
Wright, Frank Lloyd *Richland Center* . . . . Artist 96
Wyoming
MacLachlan, Patricia – *Cheyenne* . . . . Author 96
Yugoslavia
Filipovic, Zlata – *Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzogovina* . . . . Sep 94
Seles, Monica – *Novi Sad, Serbia* . . . . Jan 96
Zaire
Mobutu Sese Seko – *Lisala* . . . . ModAfr 97
Zambia
Kaunda, Kenneth – *Lubwa* . . . . ModAfr 97
Zimbabwe
Mugabe, Robert – *Kutama* . . . . . ModAfr 97

Birthday Index

	January	Year
1	Salinger, J.D.	1919
2	Asimov, Isaac	1920
4	Naylor, Phyllis Reynolds	1933
	Shula, Don	1930
8	Hawking, Stephen W.	1942
9	Menchu, Rigoberta	1959
	Nixon, Richard	1913
12	Limbaugh, Rush	1951
15	Werbach, Adam	1973
16	Fossey, Dian	1932
17	Carrey, Jim	1962
	Cormier, Robert	1925
	Jones, James Earl	1931
18	Messier, Mark	1961
19	Askins, Renee	1959
	Johnson, John	1918
21	Domingo, Placido	1941
	Olajuwon, Hakeem	1963
22	Chavis, Benjamin	1948
23	Thiessen, Tiffani-Amber	1974
25	Alley, Kirstie	1955
28	Gretzky, Wayne	1961
29	Abbey, Edward	1927
	Gilbert, Sara	1975
	Winfrey, Oprah	1954
31	Ryan, Nolan	1947

	February	Year
1	Spinelli, Jerry	1941
	Yeltsin, Boris	1931
3	Nixon, Joan Lowery	1927
	Rockwell, Norman	1894
4	Parks, Rosa	1913
5	Aaron, Hank	1934
6	Leakey, Mary	1913
	Zmeskal, Kim	1976
7	Brooks, Garth	1962
	Wilder, Laura Ingalls	1867
8	Grisham, John	1955
10	Konigsburg, E.L.	1930
	Norman, Greg	1955
11	Brandy	1979
12	Blume, Judy	1938
15	Groening, Matt	1954
17	Anderson, Marian	1897
	Hargreaves, Alison	1962
	Jordan, Michael	1963
18	Morrison, Toni	1931
20	Adams, Ansel	1902
	Barkley, Charles	1963
	Cobain, Kurt	1967
	Crawford, Cindy	1966
21	Carpenter, Mary Chapin	1958
	Jordan, Barbara	1936
	Mugabe, Robert	1924
24	Jobs, Steven	1955
	Whitestone, Heather	1973
25	Voigt, Cynthia	1942
27	Clinton, Chelsea	1980
28	Andretti, Mario	1940
	Pauling, Linus	1901

	March	Year
1	Ellison, Ralph Waldo	1914
	Murie, Olaus J.	1889
	Rabin, Yitzhak	1922
	Zamora, Pedro	1972
2	Gorbachev, Mikhail	1931
	Seuss, Dr.	1904
3	Hooper, Geoff	1979
	Joyner-Kersee, Jackie	1962
	MacLachlan, Patricia	1938
5	Margulis, Lynn	1938
10	Guy, Jasmine	1964
	Miller, Shannon	1977
12	Hamilton, Virginia	1936
13	Van Meter, Vicki	1982
15	Ginsburg, Ruth Bader	1933
16	O'Neal, Shaquille	1972
17	Nureyev, Rudolf	1938
18	Blair, Bonnie	1964
	de Klerk, F.W.	1936
	Queen Latifah	1970

March (continued)		Year
19	Blanchard, Rachel	1976
20	Lee, Spike	1957
21	O'Donnell, Rosie	1962
22	Shatner, William	1931
25	Lovell, Jim	1928
	Steinem, Gloria	1934
26	Allen, Marcus	1960
	O'Connor, Sandra Day	1930
27	Carey, Mariah	1970
28	James, Cheryl	
	McEntire, Reba	1955
30	Dion, Celine	1968
	Hammer	1933
31	Chavez, Cesar	1927
	Gore, Al	1948

April		Year
1	Maathai, Wangari	1940
2	Carvey, Dana	1955
3	Garth, Jennie	1972
	Goodall, Jane	1934
4	Angelou, Maya	1928
5	Powell, Colin	1937
6	Watson, James D.	1928
7	Dougals, Marjory Stoneman	1890
10	Madden, John	1936
12	Cleary, Beverly	1916
	Danes, Claire	1979
	Doherty, Shannen	1971
	Letterman, David	1947
13	Brandis, Jonathan	1976
14	Rose, Pete	1941
16	Abdul-Jabbar, Kareem	1947
	Selena	1971
	Williams, Garth	1912
17	Champagne, Larry III	1985
18	Hart, Melissa Joan	1976
22	Levi-Montalcini, Rita	1909
	Oppenheimer, J. Robert	1904
25	Fitzgerald, Ella	1917
26	Pei, I.M.	1917
28	Baker, James	1930
	Duncan, Lois	1934
	Hussein, Saddam	1937
	Kaunda, Kenneth	1924
	Leno, Jay	1950
29	Agassi, Andre	1970
	Seinfeld, Jerry	1954

May		Year
2	Spock, Benjamin	1903
7	Land, Edwin	1909
9	Bergen, Candice	1946
10	Jamison, Judith	1944
11	Farrakhan, Louis	1933
13	Rodman, Dennis	1961
14	Lucas, George	1944
	Smith, Emmitt	1969
15	Albright, Madeleine	1937
	Johns, Jasper	1930
	Zindel, Paul	1936
17	Paulsen, Gary	1939
18	John Paul II	1920
21	Robinson, Mary	1944
23	Bardeen, John	1908
	O'Dell, Scott	1898
26	Ride, Sally	1951
27	Carson, Rachel	1907
	Kerr, M.E.	1927
30	Cohen, Adam Ezra	1979

June		Year
1	Lalas, Alexi	1970
	Morissette, Alanis	1974
4	Kistler, Darci	1964
5	Scarry, Richard	1919
6	Rylant, Cynthia	1954
7	Brooks, Gwendolyn	1917
	Oleynik, Larisa	1981
8	Bush, Barbara	1925
	Edelman, Marian Wright	1939
	Wayans, Keenen Ivory	1958
	Wright, Frank Lloyd	1869
10	Sendak, Maurice	1928
11	Cousteau, Jacques	1910
	Montana, Joe	1956
12	Bush, George	1924
13	Allen, Tim	1953
	Christo	1935
14	Bourke-White, Margaret	1904
	Graf, Steffi	1969
15	Horner, Jack	1946
16	McClintock, Barbara	1902
	Shakur, Tupac	1971
17	Gingrich, Newt	1943
	Jansen, Dan	1965
18	Morris, Nathan	1971
	Van Allsburg, Chris	1949

June (continued)		Year
19	Abdul, Paula	1962
	Aung San Suu Kyi	1945
20	Goodman, John	1952
21	Bhutto, Benazir	1953
	Breathed, Berke	1957
22	Bradley, Ed	1941
23	Rudolph, Wilma	1940
	Thomas, Clarence	1948
25	Carle, Eric	1929
	Gibbs, Lois	1951
26	LeMond, Greg	1961
27	Babbitt, Bruce	1938
	Perot, H. Ross	1930

July		Year
1	Brower, David	1912
	Diana, Princess of Wales	1961
	Duke, David	1950
	Lewis, Carl	1961
	McCully, Emily Arnold	1939
2	George, Jean Craighead	1919
	Marshall, Thurgood	1908
	Thomas, Dave	1932
5	Watterson, Bill	1958
7	Chagall, Marc	1887
8	Sealfon, Rebecca	1983
9	Hanks, Tom	1956
	Hassan II	1929
	Krim, Mathilde	1926
10	Ashe, Arthur	1943
	Boulmerka, Hassiba	1969
11	Cisneros, Henry	1947
	White, E.B.	1899
12	Cosby, Bill	1937
	Yamaguchi, Kristi	1972
13	Ford, Harrison	1942
	Stewart, Patrick	1940
15	Aristide, Jean-Bertrand	1953
16	Sanders, Barry	1968
18	Mandela, Nelson	1918
19	Tarvin, Herbert	1985
20	Hillary, Sir Edmund	1919
21	Reno, Janet	1938
	Williams, Robin	1952
22	Calder, Alexander	1898
	Dole, Bob	1923
	Hinton, S.E.	1948
23	Haile Selassie	1892
24	Krone, Julie	1963
	Wilson, Mara	1987
26	Berenstain, Jan	1923
28	Davis, Jim	1945
29	Burns, Ken	1953
	Dole, Elizabeth Hanford	1936
	Jennings, Peter	1938
	Morris, Wanya	1973
30	Hill, Anita	1956
	Moore, Henry	1898
	Schroeder, Pat	1940
31	Reid Banks, Lynne	1929

August		Year
1	Brown, Ron	1941
	Coolio	1963
	Garcia, Jerry	1942
2	Baldwin, James	1924
	Healy, Bernadine	1944
3	Roper, Dee Dee	
	Savimbi, Jonas	1934
5	Ewing, Patrick	1962
6	Robinson, David	1965
	Warhol, Andy	?1928
7	Duchovny, David	1960
	Leakey, Louis	1903
8	Boyd, Candy Dawson	1946
9	Anderson, Gillian	1968
	Houston, Whitney	1963
	McKissack, Patricia C.	1944
	Sanders, Deion	1967
	Travers, P.L.	?1899
11	Haley, Alex	1921
	Hogan, Hulk	1953
12	Martin, Ann M.	1955
	McKissack, Fredrick L.	1939
	Myers, Walter Dean	1937
	Sampras, Pete	1971
13	Battle, Kathleen	1948
	Castro, Fidel	1927
14	Berry, Halle	?1967
	Johnson, Magic	1959
	Larson, Gary	1950
15	Ellerbee, Linda	1944
18	Murie, Margaret	1902
19	Clinton, Bill	1946
	Soren, Tabitha	1967
20	Chung, Connie	1946
22	Bradbury, Ray	1920
	Schwarzkopf, H. Norman	1934
23	Novello, Antonia	1944
	Phoenix, River	1970

August (continued)		Year
24	Arafat, Yasir	1929
	Ripken, Cal, Jr.	1960
26	Burke, Christopher	1965
	Culkin, Macaulay	1980
	Sabin, Albert	1906
	Tuttle, Merlin	1941
28	Dove, Rita	1952
	Evans, Janet	1971
	Peterson, Roger Tory	1908
	Priestley, Jason	1969
30	Earle, Sylvia	1935
31	Perlman, Itzhak	1945

September		Year
1	Estefan, Gloria	1958
2	Bearden, Romare	?1912
	Galeczka, Chris	1981
5	Guisewite, Cathy	1950
7	Lawrence, Jacob	1917
	Moses, Grandma	1860
	Pippig, Uta	1965
8	Prelutsky, Jack	1940
	Thomas, Jonathan Taylor	1982
13	Johnson, Michael	1967
	Monroe, Bill	1911
	Taylor, Mildred D.	1943
15	Marino, Dan	1961
16	Dahl, Roald	1916
17	Burger, Warren	1907
18	de Mille, Agnes	1905
	Fields, Debbi	1956
21	Fielder, Cecil	1963
	King, Stephen	1947
	Nkrumah, Kwame	1909
23	Nevelson, Louise	1899
24	Ochoa, Severo	1905
25	Locklear, Heather	1961
	Lopez, Charlotte	1976
	Pippen, Scottie	1965
	Reeve, Christopher	1952
	Smith, Will	1968
	Walters, Barbara	1931
26	Mandela, Winnie	1934
	Stockman, Shawn	1972
27	Handford, Martin	1956
29	Berenstain, Stan	1923
	Guey, Wendy	1983
	Gumbel, Bryant	1948

October		Year
1	Carter, Jimmy	1924
2	Leibovitz, Annie	1949
3	Herriot, James	1916
	Winfield, Dave	1951
4	Rice, Anne	1941
5	Fitzhugh, Louise	1928
	Hill, Grant	1972
	Lemieux, Mario	1965
	Lin, Maya	1959
7	Ma, Yo-Yo	1955
8	Jackson, Jesse	1941
	Ringgold, Faith	1930
	Stine, R.L.	1943
9	Bryan, Zachery Ty	1981
	Senghor, Léopold Sédar	1906
10	Saro-Wiwa, Ken	1941
11	Perry, Luke	?1964
	Young, Steve	1961
12	Childress, Alice	?1920
	Ward, Charlie	1970
13	Kerrigan, Nancy	1969
	Rice, Jerry	1962
14	Daniel, Beth	1956
	Mobutu Sese Seko	1930
15	Iacocca, Lee A.	1924
17	Jemison, Mae	1956
18	Foreman, Dave	1946
	Marsalis, Wynton	1961
	Navratilova, Martina	1956
20	Kenyatta, Jomo	?1891
	Mantle, Mickey	1931
21	Gillespie, Dizzy	1956
23	Pelé	1940
26	Clinton, Hillary Rodham	1947
27	Anderson, Terry	1947
28	Gates, Bill	1955
	Salk, Jonas	1914
29	Ryder, Winona	1971
31	Candy, John	1950
	Paterson, Katherine	1932
	Pauley, Jane	1950

November		Year
2	lang, k.d.	1961
3	Arnold, Roseanne	1952
8	Mittermeier, Russell A.	1949
9	Denton, Sandi	
	Sagan, Carl	1934
11	Vonnegut, Kurt	1922

November (continued)		Year
12	Andrews, Ned	1980
	Harding, Tonya	1970
13	Goldberg, Whoopi	1949
14	Boutros-Ghali, Boutros	1922
15	O'Keeffe, Georgia	1887
16	Baiul, Oksana	1977
17	Fuentes, Daisy	1966
18	Driscoll, Jean	1966
	Mankiller, Wilma	1945
19	Strug, Kerri	1977
21	Aikman, Troy	1966
	Griffey, Ken, Jr.	1969
	Speare, Elizabeth George	1908
24	Ndeti, Cosmas	1971
25	Grant, Amy	1960
	Thomas, Lewis	1913
26	Pine, Elizabeth Michele	1975
	Schulz, Charles	1922
27	White, Jaleel	1977
29	L'Engle, Madeleine	1918
	Lewis, C. S.	1898
	Tubman, William V. S.	1895
30	Jackson, Bo	1962
	Parks, Gordon	1912

December		Year
2	Macaulay, David	1946
	Seles, Monica	1973
	Watson, Paul	1950
3	Filipovic, Zlata	1980
7	Bird, Larry	1956
8	Rivera, Diego	1886
12	Bialik, Mayim	1975
	Frankenthaler, Helen	1928
13	Fedorov, Sergei	1969
15	Aidid, Mohammed Farah	1934
	Mendes, Chico	1944
16	McCary, Michael	1971
18	Sanchez Vicario, Arantxa	1971
	Spielberg, Steven	1947
19	Morrison, Sam	1936
21	Evert, Chris	1954
	Griffith Joyner, Florence	1959
22	Pinkney, Jerry	1939
23	Avi	1937
25	Sadat, Anwar	1918
26	Butcher, Susan	1954
27	Roberts, Cokie	1943
28	Washington, Denzel	1954
30	Woods, Tiger	1975

People to Appear in Future Issues

Actors
Trini Alvarado
Richard Dean Anderson
Dan Aykroyd
Tyra Banks
Drew Barrymore
Levar Burton
Cher
Kevin Costner
Courtney Cox
Tom Cruise
Jamie Lee Curtis
Patti D'Arbanville-Quinn
Geena Davis
Ozzie Davis
Ruby Dee
Michael De Lorenzo
Matt Dillon
Michael Douglas
Larry Fishburne
Jody Foster
Morgan Freeman
Richard Gere
Tracey Gold
Graham Greene
Mark Harmon
Michael Keaton
Val Kilmer
Angela Lansbury
Joey Lawrence
Martin Lawrence
Christopher Lloyd
Kellie Martin
Marlee Matlin
Bette Midler
Alyssa Milano
Demi Moore
Rick Moranis
Tamera Mowry
Tia Mowry
Kate Mulgrew
Eddie Murphy
Liam Neeson
Leonard Nimoy
Sean Penn
Phylicia Rashad
Keanu Reeves
Jason James Richter
Julia Roberts
Bob Saget
Arnold Schwarzenegger
Alicia Silverstone
Christian Slater
Taran Noah Smith
Jimmy Smits
Wesley Snipes
Sylvester Stallone
John Travolta
Mario Van Peebles
Damon Wayans
Bruce Willis
B.D. Wong
Malik Yoba

Artists
Mitsumasa Anno
Graeme Base
Yoko Ono

Astronauts
Neil Armstrong

Authors
Jean M. Auel
John Christopher
Arthur C. Clarke
John Colville
Paula Danziger
Paula Fox
Jamie Gilson
Rosa Guy
Nat Hentoff
Norma Klein
Lois Lowry
Stephen Manes
Norma Fox Mazer
Anne McCaffrey
Gloria D. Miklowitz
Marsha Norman
Robert O'Brien
Francine Pascal
Daniel Pinkwater
Louis Sachar
John Saul
Amy Tan
Alice Walker
Jane Yolen
Roger Zelazny

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Michael Eisner
David Geffen
Wayne Huizenga
Donna Karan
Phil Knight
Estee Lauder
Sheri Poe
Anita Roddick
Donald Trump
Ted Turner
Lillian Vernon

Cartoonists
Lynda Barry
Roz Chast
Greg Evans
Nicole Hollander
Art Spiegelman
Garry Trudeau

Comedians
Billy Crystal
Steve Martin
Eddie Murphy
Bill Murray

Dancers
Debbie Allen
Mikhail Baryshnikov
Gregory Hines
Twyla Tharp
Tommy Tune

Directors/Producers
Woody Allen
Steven Bocho
Tim Burton
Francis Ford Coppola
Ron Howard
John Hughes
Penny Marshall
Leonard Nimoy
Rob Reiner
John Singleton
Quentin Tarantino

Environmentalists/Animal Rights
Kathryn Fuller
Linda Maraniss
Ingrid Newkirk
Pat Potter

Journalists
Tom Brokaw
John Hockenberry
Ted Koppel
Jim Lehrer
Dan Rather
Nina Totenberg
Mike Wallace
Bob Woodward

Musicians
Ace of Base
Babyface
Basia
George Benson
Bjork
Clint Black
Ruben Blades
Mary J. Blige
Bono
Edie Brickell
James Brown
Ray Charles
Chayanne
Natalie Cole
Cowboy Junkies
Sheryl Crow
Billy Ray Cyrus
Melissa Etheridge
Aretha Franklin
Green Day
Guns N' Roses
P.J. Harvey
Hootie & the Blowfish
India
Janet Jackson
Michael Jackson
Jewel
Winona Judd
R. Kelly
Anthony Kiedis
Lenny Kravitz
Kris Kross
James Levine

PEOPLE TO APPEAR IN FUTURE ISSUES

L.L. Cool J
Andrew Lloyd Webber
Courtney Love
Lyle Lovett
MC Lyte
Madonna
Barbara Mandrell
Branford Marsalis
Paul McCartney
Midori
Morrissey
N.W.A.
Jesseye Norman
Sinead O'Connor
Luciano Pavoratti
Pearl Jam
Teddy Pendergrass
David Pirner
Prince
Public Enemy
Raffi
Bonnie Raitt
Red Hot Chili Peppers
Lou Reed
L.A. Reid
R.E.M.
Trent Reznor
Kenny Rogers
Axl Rose
Run-D.M.C.
Paul Simon
Smashing Pumpkins
Sting
Michael Stipe
Pam Tillis
TLC
Randy Travis
Terence Trent d'Arby
Travis Tritt
U2
Eddie Vedder
Stevie Wonder
Trisha Yearwood
Dwight Yoakum
Neil Young

Politics/World Leaders
Harry A. Blackmun
Jesse Brown
Pat Buchanan
Mangosuthu Buthelezi
Violeta Barrios de Chamorro
Shirley Chisolm
Jean Chretien
Warren Christopher
Edith Cresson
Mario Cuomo
Dalai Lama
Mike Espy
Alan Greenspan
Vaclav Havel
Jack Kemp
Bob Kerrey
Kim Il-Sung
Coretta Scott King
John Major
Imelda Marcos
Slobodan Milosevic
Mother Theresa
Ralph Nader
Manuel Noriega
Hazel O'Leary
Leon Panetta
Federico Pena
Simon Peres
Robert Reich
Ann Richards
Richard Riley
Phyllis Schlafly
Donna Shalala
Desmond Tutu
Lech Walesa
Eli Weisel
Vladimir Zhirinovsky

Royalty
Charles, Prince of Wales
Duchess of York (Sarah Ferguson)
Queen Noor

Scientists
Sallie Baliunas
Avis Cohen
Donna Cox
Stephen Jay Gould
Mimi Koehl
Deborah Letourneau
Philippa Marrack
Helen Quinn
Barbara Smuts
Flossie Wong-Staal
Aslihan Yener
Adrienne Zihlman

Sports
Jim Abbott
Muhammad Ali
Michael Andretti
Boris Becker
Barry Bonds
Bobby Bonilla
Jose Canseco
Jennifer Capriati
Michael Chang
Roger Clemens
Randall Cunningham
Eric Davis
Clyde Drexler
John Elway
George Foreman
Zina Garrison
Anfernee Hardaway
Rickey Henderson
Evander Holyfield
Brett Hull
Raghib Ismail
Jim Kelly
Petr Klima
Willy Mays
Paul Molitor
Jack Nicklaus
Joe Paterno
Kirby Puckett
Pat Riley
Mark Rippien
Daryl Strawberry
Danny Sullivan
Vinnie Testaverde
Isiah Thomas
Mike Tyson
Steve Yzerman

Television Personalities
Andre Brown (Dr. Dre)
Katie Couric
Phil Donahue
Kathie Lee Gifford
Ed Gordon
Arsenio Hall
Ricki Lake
Joan Lunden
Dennis Miller
Diane Sawyer
Alison Stewart
Jon Stewart
Vanna White
Montel Williams
Paul Zaloom

Other
James Brady
Johnnetta Cole
David Copperfield
Jaimie Escalante
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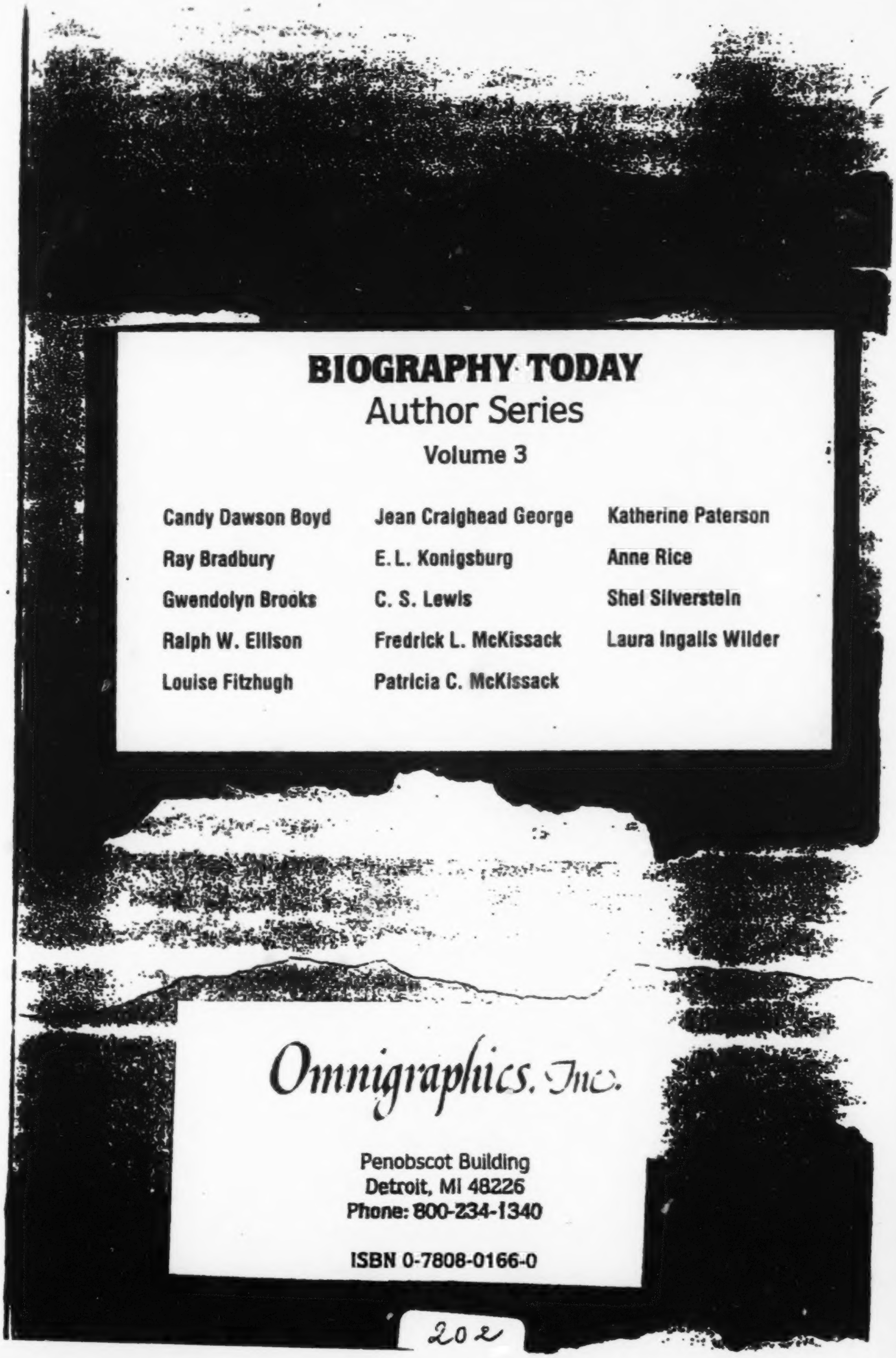

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